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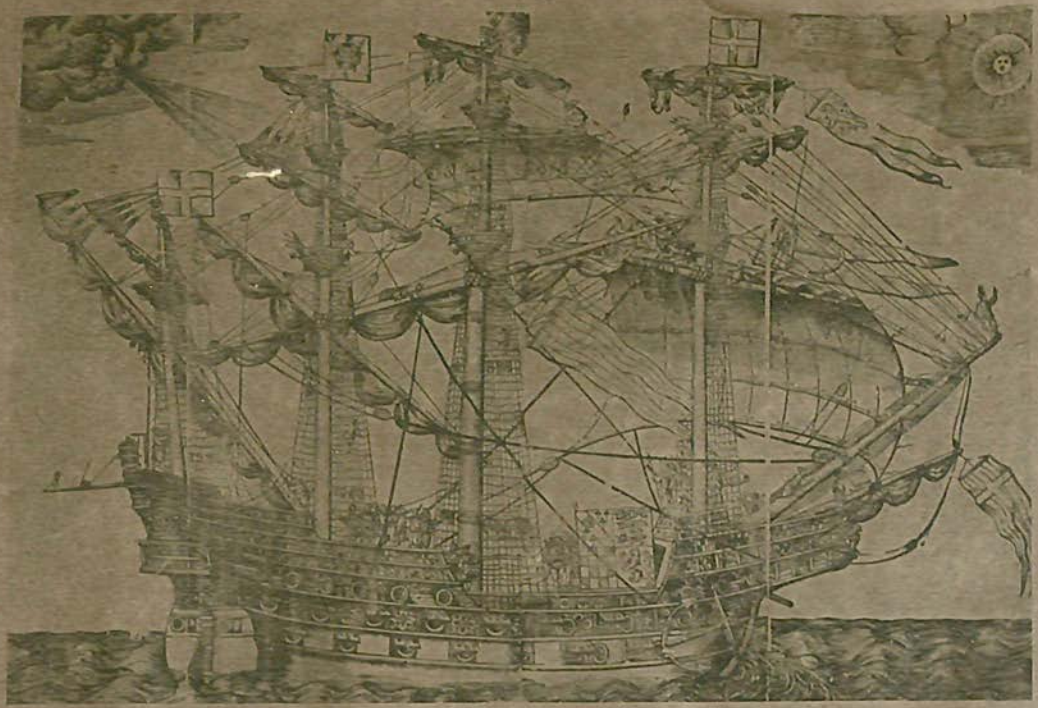
# THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PATRIOTISM

VOL. I



*The Ark Raleigh.*

*Largest ship of Queen Elizabeth's navy*

*Lord Heathfield*

*After a painting in the National Gallery*
*by Sir Joshua Reynolds*

# THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PATRIOTISM

VOL. II

00036156

# THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PATRIOTISM

BY ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD
FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
IN TWO VOLUMES: VOLUME I

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TT. v. 47

"I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green and pleasant land."

Gold
942
Win/His
1 5 6

WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LTD., PRINTERS, PLYMOUTH

ERRATA. VOL. I.

Page 197, last line, "John Doughty" should read "Thomas Doughty"

,, 249, line 9, "Calvinism" should read "Chauvinism"

,, 430, line 23, "Diamond" Pitt was grandfather to Chatham

,, 481, line 23, "He" should read "His"

TO

ROY TRUSCOTT

AMICITIAE CAUSA

# PREFACE

I HAVE to thank Mr. Temperley for his help and advice, for permitting me constantly to avail myself of his immense store of historical research, and for what is, if possible, the even more valuable assistance I have gained in the course of our many walks and conversations.

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And most of all, my grandmother.

ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD.

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# THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PATRIOTISM

# INTRODUCTION

PATRIOTISM, like beauty and goodness, is one of those things that we can never rigidly define, because though every one has some rough notion of its meaning, we doubt if any one has ever yet grasped its full meaning. We may, provisionally, describe it as the love that a man bears for his country, but this is to fly from one difficulty into two, for love is as infinite as God, and as for country, it is not always easy to tell the point at which patriotism begins and treason ends. We may not deny the title of patriot to men so various as Shakespeare and Addison, Cromwell and Nelson, Chatham and Castlereagh. But what shall we say of less obvious cases, of Walpole, of Charles James Fox, of John Bright? Can an Englishman be a patriot who prays for the defeat of our arms, like the youthful Lake Poets; or when he is receiving the pay of the foreigner, like Algernon Sidney; or when he is ready to back his domestic policy by foreign invasion, like the leaders of our Whig Revolution? These are cases of infinite delicacy, and not to be compassed by any definition.

But to speak of patriotism as the love of a man for his country, has at least the advantage of separating it into its two main elements of an emotion, the purest of which our nature is capable, and its object, which next to God,

is the utmost to which it can aspire. For patriotism is but the highest form of love for a created person, and he that would be a patriot must thus think of his country. Nor is this any figure of rhetoric, for the personality of the state is approved not only by the devotion of multitudes, but by the judgment of philosophers; it was as familiar to Plato as it was to Burke, that the nation to which we belong is not the sum of its living citizens, but includes the living and the dead and those who are yet to be.

The successive generations are but the trustees of a common heritage. Even in such a prosaic sphere as that of finance we do homage to this essential continuity, we pay for the policies of Lord North and William Pitt as for our own. We are as much the countrymen of the Lord Protector as of any living premier. It might appal the most cynical of politicians to reflect by what a cloud of witnesses his every action is surrounded. Should he betray his trust, at the bidding, it may be, of the most overwhelming majority, it is not to his contemporaries alone that he must render account. The voice of Chatham will plead against him from the skies, the blood of Harold will cry out upon him from the ground. The fixed and unquestioning recognition of this, our country's personality, that life compact of numberless other lives, is the first and great commandment of patriotism.

The history of mankind is one long commentary upon its fulfilment. It is the kernel of truth embedded within many a system of mythology. With few exceptions, we find that wherever men have been gathered together, some effort has been made to register the fact that a nation, or tribe,

does not consist only of its living members. The most important expression of this fact is ancestor-worship. The savage who believes that the ancestors and heroes of his tribe have still an interest in its fortunes, and still demand their meed of reverence and sacrifice, is a wiser man than the rationalist who says that the dead are extinct and done with, and that we are only concerned with the interests of the living. Moreover, loyalty to a man gradually transfers itself to the community. Even as regards the living, it is often curiously impersonal. There are cases in which the chief, as head of the tribe, is hedged about with such divinity, that it is death to touch him, even to save his life.

The dawning civilization of Athens, an empire made perfect in beauty, is inspired with the consciousness, rising into ecstasy, of her own living and adorable reality. The words of Pericles, as reported by Thucydides, whether they were actually spoken or not, show what the Athenian ideal was at its best. "I will speak first of our ancestors, for it is right and becoming that now, when we are lamenting for the dead, a tribute should be paid to their memory. There was never a time when they did not inhabit this land, which, by their valour, they have handed down from generation to generation, and we have received from them a free state. . . . I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, until you become filled with the love of her; and when you are impressed by this spectacle of her glory, reflect that this empire has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it, who in the hour of conflict had the fear of dishonour always present to them,

and who, if they ever failed in an enterprise, would not allow their virtue to be lost to their country, but freely gave their lives to her as the fairest offering which they could present at her feet.*

The sense of beauty that was the very essence of the Athenian ideal, was bound up with the sense of civic personality to an extent of which we can hardly conceive. We cannot read the contest of Æschylus and Euripides in the "Frogs," without realizing that the artist was as responsible a public personage as the commander of an army. And an extension of this principle over philosophy renders explicable the attitude of his judges towards Socrates. The fact of his being a philosopher and a good man could not atone for the suspicion that he was weakening the old faith, and thereby tending to weaken the state. When Aristophanes represented him as sitting in a basket, suspended in mid-air, he was putting the most deadly point of the case against him, by suggesting that he had ceased to have part or lot in the national life, and that he was drawing others after him. It was expedient that one man should die for the people, a point of view which, to judge by the evidence of the Crito, was, in the abstract, that of Socrates himself.

In the brief sunshine of Athenian power, the cult of beauty, whether it finds voice in the drama, or in prose, or in marble, or in life itself, is but the cult of one divine and beloved mother, who includes and transfigures all her children. And yet there is an element of brittleness in their love, which accounts for the too brief continuance of that life and that glory. The very perfection of Athenian

* Jowett's Translation.

art in what it set itself to accomplish, must not blind us to its limitations. It displayed an increasing tendency to exalt the reason above the soul. It shunned the mysterious, the supernatural, whatever did not lend itself to clear-cut outline and exact definition. Its deities were very beautiful, but they ceased to be divine. It is to the memory of the dead, and not to their abiding spirits, that Pericles pays his tribute of honour. Too surely has a modern critic detected the rationalist element in Euripides which, like the Socratic philosophy, was dissolving in criticism the grander faith of Æschylus. Not the arms of Sparta, but the instability, the faithlessness of the Athenians to their own ideal, left defenceless the fleet at Ægospotami, and brought to the ground the walls of Themistocles.

In the case of Rome, the conception of a common personality is worked out in a way befitting the conqueror of the world. We have first the legend of her divine origin, and the sense of her being in continual touch with the gods, expressed by the oracles and Sibylline books. Again, the worship of the dead was the bond of social life, and when the epic of Rome came to be written, the highest term of praise that could be accorded to her goddess-born ancestor was "pious," a virtue which impelled him to carry away from blazing Troy, not only his little boy and old father, but also the household gods. Yet the blood tie was not enough, by itself, for the needs of an expanding people, and thus it was that the Romans, without departing from their ancient forms, made them elastic by admitting the fiction of adoption. Upon such foundations was built up the civic patriotism whose spirit has been crystallized

in many a brave legend, and most of all in the immortal line:

"Sweet and glorious it is to die for our country."

A notable instance of the same spirit has been seen in the case of that island people, which, like one of her own volcanoes, men thought asleep until she burst forth, a flaming terror, in the eyes of Europe. The spirit that made her troops march up against modern forts, to be mowed down in swathes by machine guns, was one that had its rise in the same all-pervading sense of national continuity. Even through centuries of impotence, the office of Mikado had ever been sacred, and Japan never dethroned the line of Jimmu, the descendants of the gods. When General Oku, after many vain assaults, at length carried the trenches of Nanshan, they found the body of an officer, with the flag of his regiment wound round his head, like a towel, and with it these lines, stained with the author's blood:

"Though our life vanish as the morning dew,
O Sovereign Prince! yet loyally and true,
Thy Standard still, forever shall we guard."*

Even more impressive in its dry, matter-of-fact formality is Admiral Togo's official dispatch to the spirits of the dead. The Japanese fleet had gained undisputed command of the Yellow Sea, and its immediate enemy, the Port Arthur squadron, had been destroyed. "We hope," concludes the Admiral, "that this intelligence will be pleasing to your spirits." The prayer of their National Anthem is that their empire may last through a thousand ages, till pebbles become great boulders, covered with

* See "Master Singers of Japan," by Catherine Walsh.

green moss. Whistler was peculiarly unfortunate when he tried to prove the capriciousness of art by instancing Japan. It was only a few years ago that Europeans thought of her inhabitants as quaint and amusing little people, with their fans and paper houses, and the topsy-turvy view of life that is the theme of Gilbert's "Mikado." We have learnt now to think differently of the reverence that centred round the Holy Mountain, and the joy that sings to greet the cherry blossom. "I, too, am happy," writes the Empress, "that my heart can share my people's pleasure in the joys of spring." Verily it was this joy and this reverence, that laughed in song blossoms and broidered birds upon fans, that leapt forth also in pale flame from the barbettes of the *Mikasa*, and rose, glorious like the morning sun, over the hills of Port Arthur.

A yet more famous example is that of the elect, but not wholly lovable race, the records of whose past greatness have been held divine even by their persecutors. In Jewish history we trace the building up of a personality so intense, that neither exile, nor subjection, nor centuries of dispersion have been able so much as to weaken it. Their unique situation, surrounded on all sides by warlike and hostile communities, wedged in between empires, demanded from the Jews a combination of qualities unparalleled in the history of the world. In that sense at least may they be regarded as a chosen people.

That they emerged at all from their ordeal, must be ascribed to the perpetual haunting sense of God's presence, which alone could have sufficed to give them the necessary cohesion. This consciousness was, indeed, of slow growth,

and accompanied by relapses into the frank polytheism of other nations. But the belief in God always went hand in hand with patriotism. The heroic leader, who first welded a nomad horde into a nation, certainly feared God, and the long and confused period of the Judges, when not only unity but racial purity was at stake, is the record of how, again and again, a backsliding and enslaved nation was saved by rallying to the cause of Jehovah, no local Baal or Chemosh, but One at Whose presence the earth shook and the heavens dropped, and Whose favour was strictly dependent upon the conduct of His people.

As national consciousness deepened and civilization increased, the idea of God became more developed and more sublime. The message of the prophets is that of the judges, adapted to the needs of a people who have outgrown their childhood. These men, who loved their country hardly less than they loved God, taught that nations could only exist by proving themselves worthy of their existence, and conforming to the divine will. Amos, the first of them to put his message into writing, warned them not to look for the day of the Lord, for it would be a dark day. When the Northern Kingdom had fallen to Sargon and the clouds were darkening around Jerusalem, the patriotism of the prophets looked to the ultimate restoration of an Israel, purged by suffering, and worthy to raise an ensign of righteousness to which all nations should resort. Hence emerges the conception of a Messiah.

After the captivity, priestly reformers sought to enshrine the national ideal in a framework of ceremony. The danger of forms degenerating into formality was

of course inherent in such a system, but it may not be denied that for centuries it worked well. Even when they had lost their independence, even amid all the levelling influences of Greek and Roman civilization, the Jews preserved their faith and character, and bequeathed not only the heroic example of the Maccabees, but the mellow and gentle wisdom of the Rabbis. Centuries of ceremonial drill were needed to produce the age-long miracle of Judaism, which astonished even Frederick the Great.

Our Saviour Himself, the Messiah of Whom the prophets had dreamed, loved His country with an ardour not less than that of Isaiah. It would have been strange indeed had He cast aside the heritage of the forerunners whose work He had come to fulfil, doubly strange, if we remember that He recognized His descent from David. He saw that the thing needful was no political, but a spiritual Reformation, and in the national as well as the individual sphere, His teaching was, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." In the last week of His life on earth He evidently intended to compass the Reformation by a supreme attempt to capture Jerusalem, and if He failed it was through no miscalculation of His, but the free choice of those to whom He appealed. Our Lord had that respect for national tradition which has ever formed one of the most vital elements of patriotism, He continually referred to the authority of the national Scriptures, He preached in His own country, chose His friends from among His countrymen, and even in His final agony prayed for their forgiveness. When the Roman Governor asked Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" the reply was, "Thou sayest it." His grief upon the

rejection of His message was touching and unbounded: "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings—and ye would not!" He would have been less than perfect man had He failed in this, the highest form of human love.

We see, by the example of these great peoples, how essential is the bond of a common personality, a communion of souls uniting the past with the future. It is, in the phrase of Spenser, literally brutish not to understand how much we owe to her, that gave us every good thing we have. But our survey, brief as it has necessarily been, is suggestive of a further truth, whose application to every phase of our own history it is the purpose of this book to trace. In direct proportion to each nation's patriotism have been the value and immortality of its achievement. The very names of Athens, Jerusalem, Rome, Venice, Florence, France, Germany, and England are sufficient to establish this in its main outlines, and we shall find it working itself out in the minutest detail.

Take the case of medieval and renaissance Italy. The two suns of art, which radiated beauty through and beyond all the parts of Italy, were Venice and Florence, cities where the flame of patriotism burnt with the most intense ardour. To honour and beautify their native town, her churches and her public buildings, was an object worthy to call forth the genius of masters. We know how the citizens of Florence bore one of Cimabue's paintings in triumph through the streets, to find a resting-place in the church of Santa Maria Novella; and how one

of Tintoretto's most superb masterpieces is that of Venice sitting enthroned as Queen of the Sea. It was only when Florence sank into slavery that the stream of her art was dried. Her humiliation is reflected for ever in the agony of her Michelangelo. In the little chapel of the Medici it writhes and suffers in the white marble, and the giant heart is breaking still. Yet this contrast between what must be and what might have been, is less terrible than the final gesture, with which the Christ of the Sistine shatters the universe in his wrath and vengeance.

If we descend to a slightly lower level, we shall find the same rule holding good in the case of Pisa, whose patriotism unfolded first in struggles with the Saracens, and then against her Christian neighbours. As long as the spirit of the citizens was unbroken, even misfortunes could not choke their sense of beauty, and the Campo Santo was adorned during a period of unsuccessful war. We have the little town of Siena, whose warm-blooded and turbulent spirit survives on the canvas of Giovanni; while the pride of Milan is reflected in the art of the Lombard school. But we look in vain to Naples, the most delightful of all the Italian states, and to Rome, where we might have expected the spirit of art to spring up from the soil—they are voiceless and handless. It is because there was little patriotism and little national pride within their walls, that they could not break forth into song or blossom into colour. The same is the lesson of the later Italian schools. They had the whole glory of the past behind them, they applied themselves with exemplary diligence to learn all she had to teach, they were skilled in all that could be learnt of technique. Yet to what

purpose, when the quickening fire was lacking? Insipid and heartless was the best of their work, tame Madonnas and sentimental Cecilias, the tinsel of the Caracci and the dullness of Canaletto. These citizens of an enslaved Italy knew not patriotism.

There is, indeed, a form of art which flies from life and does not recognize a motherland. To this may not unjustly be applied the modern term decadent. Again and again we meet with it, always as a sign of decay, an aftermath to the daylight splendour of national art. It is fragile, self-conscious, delicately lascivious; it is apt to serve as an opiate instead of a tonic. We find it in the effeminate preciosity of the Ming period in China, and to a less extent, in the Ukiyoye school of Japan; it appears in the later Greek literature, from which the sternness and reverence have departed, and which has given to modern decadents their idea of paganism; it flourished in the Roman Empire, as the walls of Pompeii deliciously bear witness; in Italy it inspires what is best in the work of the eclectics, it is in the pallor of Guido and the silly blue of Sassoferrato; in pre-revolutionary France it languishes in the lily Olympians of Boucher, and in the classicism of which André Chenier's "Jeune Tarentine" is the most exquisite product. But decadence is not always the sign of total and irretrievable decay. It may affect only a section of the nation, as in the case of the French nobility before the Revolution, and as with Ukiyoye, it may be the prelude to a national revival; for mankind is not the slave of tendencies, and when a Jonah is sent by God, it is possible that Nineveh may repent and be saved.

There is, then, something to be said for the Philistine's crude distinction between healthy and morbid art. For this we must not blame the artist. Put him amid a medium where his sympathies are choked and his art prostituted, and he is bound to express his personality through strange and poisoned channels. Make him pass his life in vitiated air, and his cheek will take no glow of health, but the dying loveliness of consumption. Yet the healthy art stands on a higher level of beauty, it is rooted in the nation's soul, and while it does not lack delicacy, it has strength to back it. Decadent art is often precious, but it is seldom of any depth, its beauty is that of a mood, of an hour. It is in the Dantes, the Shakespeares, the Michelangelos, that art becomes cosmic.

Thus far we have regarded the love of our country rather from the objective standpoint. We have seen how deep a philosophy, how sacred an obligation, is implied in those two words, "our country," and how by the love we cherish towards her shall the value of our works be determined. It now behoves us to concentrate our attention upon the word "love," and this is doubly necessary, because it is the common notion that patriotism is much the same at all times and everywhere, a thing readily perceived, and whose presence or absence it is easy to determine. And yet it is probable that in no two persons has patriotism ever meant exactly the same thing, because love is deeper than all seas, and a man's heart is likely to be a little vessel.

There is the man who will shout himself hoarse at the sight of a regiment returning from the front, and yet would consider it an unspeakable outrage upon his liberty

were he expected to bear arms in the defence of his country; there are men who would lay down their lives for her in battle, and yet grudge one penny towards healing her social sores; there is the type of Shakespeare's Coriolanus, who thinks less of his duty than of his private honour or revenge; there are the Neys and Murats, more than lions in the field, less than curs off it; there are some who have such a low opinion of their cause that they think to serve it by maligning foreigners, by telling lies; some who devote their lives to their country, yet hold her honour so light, that they would have her only strong, and not noble or high-principled at all. To become a perfect patriot is as hard as it is to become a perfect saint. Many there be who stand in the outer courts, who admire the beauties of the temple, and catch an occasional burst of the music, but few indeed are they who have passed the veil, and stood within the Holy of Holies. And because the idol of Jingo, or the Calf of Mammon, has been set up in the outer courts, is no reason for men to blaspheme the inner mysteries.

There is something generous and uncalculating about all forms of love, and patriotism is no exception. He who is great of heart is the opposite to the ethical man of Herbert Spencer, who never does anything without consulting his utilitarian calculus. Like the Puritan soldiers, he rejoices greatly when he sees the enemy, and the thought of odds inspires him with the spirit of the old English saga:

> "Heart shall the harder be,
> Mind shall the keener be,
> Mood shall the more be
> As our main lessens."

For this reason, until the improvement of weapons made it impossible, brave men usually preferred to go to battle to the strains of music. The pæan of the Greeks, the pibroch of the Highlanders, even the yell of the savage, are manifestations of the same spirit. It is, to put it philosophically, affirmative, it says " yes " to life. There is one little part of the universe of which it knows for a certainty that God made it very good, and this must be a bar to absolute pessimism. Great pessimists have been conspicuous for their lack of patriotism ; Schopenhauer and Baudelaire, among the moderns, and the Oriental sages who held life to be a cruel illusion, were no lovers of their country. The only exception is where the country has been so shattered, that its prospects appear beyond hope of recovery. Thus Leopardi and Chopin are patriots, but they are patriots without a country. Yet he who put music to Poland's grave-song, has his moments of ecstasy, and the pomp and triumph of the " Polonaise Militaire " ; even his despair at the fall of Cracow breathes a less hopeless spirit than any chapter of Schopenhauer.

The more joyful and careless forms of human expression are peculiarly suited to patriotic feeling. The love of mankind lies flat in disquisitions, but it is the nature of patriotism to bubble over in laughter and chorus. Even such catches as " Yankee Doodle " and " Cock o' the North " have been used to convey the deepest emotions, and the Federal troops marched to victory to the swinging tune of " John Brown's Body." When the Grand Army lay encamped on Boulogne cliffs, the English nation broke forth spontaneously into song, jolly, good-humoured

chorus for the most part, roundly damning "Boney" and all his subjects, and our Elizabethan worthies refused even to spoil a game of bowls at the approach of the Invincible Armada. There is a wisdom springing from immediate certainty that defeats all the calculations of reason. It was an act of palpable folly, from the strategist's point of view, for a handful of Spartans to expose themselves to certain destruction at Thermopylæ, and yet it is probable that the moral effect of this heroism saved Greece. There were clever men by scores, during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, to point out the folly of squandering blood and treasure in unheard-of quantities, and to no apparent effect, but it was our dogged and often blundering persistence that finally saved Europe. Heroic nations are like their own heroes, they do not make finicking estimates of what may be safe or profitable, but rather strive to be worthy of themselves, knowing full well that some things are to be resisted even against a world in arms, and that it is better to lose wealth, armies and very existence, rather than suffer their standards to be smirched with dishonour.

It is impossible for unaided reason to give its sanction to those actions which tend to the ultimate welfare of nations. When the wicked everywhere prosper, and heroes and patriots sink to the grave execrated, baffled, despairing, who shall disprove the counsel of Omar-FitzGerald:

> "Ah, make the most of what we have to spend,
> Before we, too, into the dust descend!"

Such men as Louis XV and his friend, the old Duke of Richelieu, could have afforded to laugh to scorn the most

scientific of moralists. Did their actions tend to an ultimate decrease of the general happiness? This would not be too easy to prove, and even if it were, what did it matter so long as their own lives were passed in a whirl of pleasure and magnificence? Suppose that some early evolutionist had explained that such pleasures tended to the degeneracy of the race. "And why not?" is the reply, "we shall watch the process with interest, supposing that any two of you evolutionists can agree as to what constitutes progress and what degeneration. Besides, at the worst, you have only to blame the heredity and environment, that have made our royal will what it is." And if we urge, as a last resort, that such conduct involves the ruin of France and her Royal House, and the deluging of Europe in blood, the reply is on record, and it is conclusive: "Aprèss nous le deluge." What man of common sense would exchange the merry life of King Charles II for the blindness and sorrows of Milton, or the income of our more notorious prostitutes of literature for the miserable end of Chatterton?

Nor do we find that reason has been able to preserve nations from disaster at the hands of less intellectual communities. All the super-subtlety of the sixteenth-century Italians could not prevent the ruder nations of the Continent from scattering their armies and enslaving most of their cities, nor could it give them the necessary steadfastness to combine loyally in a common cause. The culture of degenerate Rome could not save her from the barbarians. The most that intellect can do is to produce a number of astute scoundrels, each working for his own ends, and ready to betray the rest if it suits him. The

most perfect type of the godless intellectual man is a Fouché or Cæsar Borgia, and woe betide the state that puts its trust in such leadership!

We see that patriotism, the cohesive force of states, is spiritual; we might go further and say that it is religious. It is the function of religion to direct a man's love outside himself, to merge his being in the service of a cause, and patriotism bids him to love his country as he loves his God, with all his heart, and with all his mind, and with all his soul, and with all his strength. There can be no conflict of God and motherland, for love is an inexhaustible fountain that only gushes forth more freely the deeper we drink of it. Nor is patriotism something enjoined from outside which hampers our liberty, but a vital part of our nature, without which no man can hope to attain perfection. He who lacks it is the cityless man of Aristotle, a moral outcast and a pariah.

And seeing that patriotism partakes of the nature of worship and, if need be, of martyrdom, seeing that it demands the unquestioning and absolute sacrifice of the man to the cause, that it calls into play the noblest and most endearing qualities of our nature, it would surely be too monstrous a paradox to affirm that it seeks only the selfish interest of the motherland, that it is bound by no law of God or man save the miserable egotism of the thirty millions. He would not be a perfect lover who should will his beloved to be worse than himself. Rather will he strive to realize, through her, all that he dreams of good or beautiful. If he is a Greek, she must attain that flawless harmony as of the Œdipus Rex or the Hermes of Praxiteles, to which his soul aspires; for the Roman, she must

give to the world her Imperial peace, sparing the fallen and subduing the proud; for the Christian, she must embody his ideal of stainless knighthood, *sans peur et sans reproche*, seeking not her own, but striving to be perfect even as her Master was perfect.

This, which we may call the heroic or poetic view of statesmanship, stands in perpetual opposition to another, whose upholders maintain that human affairs ought to be regarded with the same cold detachment as we give to the exact sciences, that there is, in fact, a science of society, with ascertainable laws, and capable of being applied to practice. This doctrine attained its greatest vogue in the nineteenth century, though we shall find it recurring, in one form or another, all through modern history. It received its grandest and frankest exposition in Machiavelli's "Prince," which was the parent of countless systems of "kingcraft"; we find it in the "Leviathan," in Locke's Whig apologetics, in the Essays of Hume, in the writings of Helvetius and the encyclopædists. We shall trace in detail, in a later chapter, how the momentary triumph of this view of life has resulted in one of the most complete intellectual fiascos in history, and how, during the last fifty years, social science, in all its branches, has passed through every stage of contradiction to a state of ill-concealed bankruptcy. But here we are concerned, not so much with the failure of the system, as with its relation to the subject of this book.

Just as the poetic view is generally favourable to patriotism, so we shall find Western cosmopolitanism almost invariably reposing upon the material principle. Nor is the reason far to seek. The motherland, we know,

is but the highest form of personality; we love her, are proud of her, are grateful to her, and above all, are prepared to undergo every sacrifice, even of life itself, in her cause. But the love of humanity is an abstract and intellectual concept. We shall hardly talk about the roast beef of old Earth, or the green fields of terra firma, or this right little, tight little globe. Hardly in our most whimsical moments shall we chant such ditties as :

> " Two skinny Martians, one Neptunee,
> One jolly Earth-man lick 'em all three."

The occasions on which men are called to give up their lives for humanity are too rare, and too specialized, to form the basis of a common feeling in any way comparable to patriotism. In debating societies, at High Tables, in text-books and formal treatises, the cult of *homo sapiens* has the widest vogue, for there is a veneer of logical consistency about it, which gives it a fatal attraction for those whose intellectual counters are words and not things; but a whiff of sea breeze, or the sight of the old *Victory* lying in Portsmouth harbour, is a spell powerful enough to chase such bloodless wraiths for ever from the hearts of true men.

Amongst Oriental nations the enemy of patriotism has been not so much materialism, as a tendency to regard life itself as an evil or an illusion, to be escaped from as quickly as possible. The Eastern mind has, as a rule, tended towards passivity and resignation, to the neglect of the creative instinct, and it is in the works of Lao Tse, the arch-exponent of the passive life, that we find some of the most striking anticipations of modern humanitarian doctrines. Weapons of war, according to him, are ill-

omened and hateful, and he who has won a great victory ought to bewail his triumph with bitter lamentations, which is also the precept and practice of Asoka, the royal disciple of Buddha. In the case of India, the exaltation of the contemplative life, and of the escape from reality, appears to have gained ground the further she got from her Aryan origin. The old Vedic hymns are full of joy in contact with the forces of nature, and even the joy of human battle. Of their two Epics, one is the story of Rama, a sort of Indian Hercules, who goes about quelling the demon enemies of mankind, and the other, a diffuse and shadowy Iliad, centres round a tribal war between the Pandavas and the Kurus. Even the much later Brahminic addition, the Bhagavad Gita, upholds an ideal of unselfish activity in preference to passive inaction. But the general tendency, and especially of Buddhism, is to drift away from the world, to make gentleness and submission the chief virtues to be sought after.

It will perhaps be asked how the Japanese managed partially to adopt Buddhism and yet retain their national spirit. The case is a remarkable one, and will be found to substantiate our previous conclusions. For Japan was careful only to admit Buddhism after extracting its poison. Her original faith was Shinto, in which religion and patriotism were practically identified, and the Japanese would only let in Buddhism after safeguarding the national spirit, by making the two religions enter into alliance. This was the limit of their toleration, not to persecute on religious grounds, but to safeguard patriotism at all costs. Thus the Christians were allowed to make headway until they were suspected of disloyalty, and

then they were massacred. One of the first steps in the national revival was to resuscitate and establish Shinto, in order to strengthen patriotism and loyalty to the Imperial Dynasty.

It is only natural that the Orient should have its points of sympathy with Western materialism. Both are destructive of free will, and such cults as have exercised most influence in Europe reduce God to a vast shadow, as in the case of Brahminism, or leave Him out of account, as in the Confucian Analects. Immortality is either not to be expected, or not to be desired. Hence we find that the other Eastern creeds enjoy a larger tolerance at the hands of materialists, than Christ or Christianity. The view which regards life as an illusion or a nightmare, acts as a reinforcement to that which treats it as a function of matter, though as regards Western Europe the former is the more modern of the two. We are here concerned not with the multiplicity of beliefs that baffles the scholar, but with the vague and generalized impression of the East that has exercised its influence over Western thought ; for we shall find it a rule of well-nigh universal application, that foreign systems of philosophy shed most of their details in the course of the journey, and the fate which has overtaken such near neighbours as Rousseau, Comte and Nietzsche, is not likely to spare Indian and Chinese sages.

There is one other aspect of the subject to be considered. Hitherto, in talking of love for our country, we have taken no account of a possible conflict of allegiances. Was George Washington a patriot ? And if George Washington, why not Robert Emmet ? And if Robert Emmet,

why not the leaders of the Spa Fields Riot? What is the country of a Hungarian, or a Jew, or a Hindu, or an Irishman? Such problems are not to be solved by the application of any formula. They involve spiritual issues of the utmost nicety, and in every case the soul must needs stand and make her choice alone. The first duty is to find out where the domain of love ends, and that of intellectual abstraction begins. Let us suppose the choice to be put before an Irishman. He must inquire, "Can I look upon myself as a free citizen of the empire? Can I feel pride in her past, joy in her achievements, shame in her dishonour? Can I reverence Shakespeare as my countryman and George as my King? Laying aside all thought of self, and standing alone as a soul before God, dare I vow to give her my love?" If the answer is "No," he is a coward who would live as the member of a conquered race. If "Yes," it need not detract one jot from his love for Ireland. Is the crown of empire less glorious because one of her jewels is an emerald? Shall we be jealous because her songs and her legends and her faith bring something to the common stock, that not all the nations of the world could replace?

He must be dull of soul who thinks to foster the welfare of the whole, by crushing out all that is best in the parts. Rather will the true statesman cherish and intensify the distinctive features of every province and every hamlet. What profit is it to have conquered Hindustan if it is only to turn the Hindus into cockneys? We should be like the thief who tried to melt down a bronze statue. To quicken and not to crush should be the end of empire-builders, and it is only by a gradation of local

patriotisms that the soul can rise to a world-wide imperialism.

Our history closes upon the same note as it commences. In early times the problem was how to weld a number of personal and sectional loyalties into an English patriotism, in the most restricted sense. Since that period England has grown into Great Britain, and Great Britain into the British Empire. Those narrow and uncompromising patriots, who think that by extending her bounds England must necessarily lose her personality, might just as logically have opposed the Union of the Heptarchy under Egbert, or that of England and Scotland under Anne. That there is a real danger is not to be denied. We have the case of Rome, who in conquering all her neighbours vanquished herself, and became a provincial city in a Byzantine despotism. The solution of the problem on an even vaster scale has been reserved for England. We have had one fearful lesson in the results of treating our fellow-citizens as tributaries, and in recent years we have seen how the waters of the five oceans cannot quench love.

For not in gold and not in armaments lies Britain's salvation, but in the love of her children. The key of history is forged of no baser metal, and the sacred influence which binds heart to heart, and unites the living with the dead, is but a portion of that which quickens and glorifies the universe—divine and eternal Love.

# BOOK I

## THE FOUNDATIONS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

THE building up of a common personality is, of necessity, the work of many generations. Premature and superficial indications may point towards a patriotism for which the nation is, as yet, unripe. The human mind is so constituted, that any real and considerable change in its attitude is never sudden. This is the difficulty which confronts advocates of a volunteer system of military training. A fortnight's, or even a six months' camp may turn out a creditable peace soldier; but in the stress and fatigue of real battle, it is the subconscious habits of obedience and co-operation, which have sunk in during years of training, that give the victory into the hands of regulars. In art, too, the theory of the divinely inspired novice remains the solace and the snare of amateurs; while in an even higher sphere it is the vulgarest of delusions to imagine that sinners can become saints as the result of one hour's hysteria. It took more than a Magna Carta to secure England's liberties, and more than a Cressy to cement her patriotism.

We must regard the Middle Ages as a long period of

preparation, in the course of which the obstacles to patriotism were one by one removed, and the seeds sown which were not to burst into flower, until the Almighty blew with his winds and scattered the Armada. At the period of the Norman Conquest all circumstances seemed in league, to render the very idea unthinkable. William the Bastard was a conqueror of another stamp than Canute, at whose passing the monks of Ely had been moved to song; and the Norman Conquest of England was of a sterner nature than the sea-king Rollo's conquest of Normandy a century and a half before. Even though he might express his contempt for his French suzerain by tipping him over backwards in his throne, by way of homage, the Northman soon realized that he was in the presence of a superior civilization, and with the ready capacity for assimilation which was characteristic of his race, he soon acquired its language, its religion, and its outlook on life, thus entering, by a peaceful and more glorious conquest, upon the inheritance of the saints and the Cæsars. But in conquering England, he might not unnaturally claim to be coming into contact with an inferior civilization. William of Malmesbury, who was incomparably the greatest of the chroniclers, has drawn the contrast between Norman and Englishman in terms to which the modern historian has little to add. The masterful, subtle and polite Norman, with a religious ardour as fierce as his love of battle, was naturally contemptuous of the coarser-grained Saxon, with his prolonged and swinish orgies, and his lower standard of culture. For, in truth, the Englishman had not improved since the days of Alfred, and in the years preceding the Conquest he seems to have been upon the downward grade. Learning of all sorts was neglected; "a person who understood grammar," says the chronicler, "was a source of wonder and amusement." And this was just at the time when Normandy was coming under the

influence of the Cluniac reformation, and her churchmen were aglow with new learning and enthusiasm.

It does not fall within the scope of this history, to inquire minutely into the patriotism of Englishmen before the Conquest. That the Anglo-Saxon was capable, upon occasion, of devotion to his native land is beyond question. In Alfred, England found one who is entitled to a high place upon her roll of patriot kings, one who may literally be said to have loved her with all his heart and mind and soul and strength, who combined the best qualities of a warrior, a scholar and a Christian. We read in Asser, how he was wont to exhort, and on occasion to rebuke, his bishops, earls and great men, in order that their attention might be directed towards the common needs of the people, though, as his biographer goes on to tell us, owing to the sluggishness of the people, his commands were very imperfectly obeyed. The men who fell on Senlac Hill beneath the golden dragon of Wessex, were animated by a spirit not different from that of the squares, which overthrew the veterans of Napoleon. "They were few in number," says the chronicler, "but very brave, and throwing aside all regard for their own safety, laid down their lives for their country."

The literature of Saxon patriotism is scanty, but it produced one poem or saga, which, though strangely neglected, is not unworthy to bear comparison with "Chevy Chase" and Drayton's "Agincourt." It is called "The Battle of Maldon," and describes the encounter between a force of sea rovers, and a shire levy under Brythnoth, "the folk's elder." The proud challenge of the Danish herald, and the answer of the old Earl, who tells them that if they want tribute they shall be paid in coin of spear and sword-edge, are pitched in the heroic key. Then follows Brythnoth's act of sublime madness, in abandoning an impregnable position for the sake of a

fight, and the final scene, in which the Thanes, with the exception of one who fled from the battle,

> " And the good man forsook,
> Who to him ofttimes
> Horses had given,"

make a last stand around their master's body. As the oldest and noblest of them all cries :

> " I am old of life,
> Hence stir will I not,
> And I by the half of my lord,
> By such a loved man,
> To lie am thinking."

The saga of Brunanburgh is better known, thanks to Tennyson's translation, but it misses the dignity and ineffable pathos of this " Battle of Maldon."

Saxon patriotism was, after all, an unstable and fitful thing. The country was never properly united. Even the little kingdoms of the Heptarchy were too frequently torn asunder by civil strife, and the history of Northumbria, in particular, is one weary record of dissension and regicide. A commanding personality, like Alfred or Edgar, might produce the semblance of union, but we have seen how even Alfred was hampered owing to the slackness of his people. The two battle pieces that we have just noticed can scarcely be called patriotic in the modern sense. In both the personal note is predominant, and in neither is the sentiment definitely national. After Brunanburgh,

> " Also the brethren,
> King and Atheling,
> Each in his glory,
> Went to his own West Saxon land,
> Glad of the war " ;

and in the Battle of Maldon it is the shire levy, and not a national army, that follows Brythnoth.

The Danish invasions and conquests did not bring the

evil of disunion to a close. If all the English magnates had been of the type of Brythnoth, the empire of Canute might never have been established, but the redeless Æthelred and the ironside Edmund were both hampered by treachery. The story was repeated at the time of the Norman invasion. On the one side we have foresight, determination, unity, on the other a brave leader contending in vain against lukewarmness and disloyalty. If an English fleet had been able to keep the sea, William ought never to have landed; if an English army could have maintained its watch upon the coast, he might never have got beyond Senlac. But the fleet, on which Alfred had set such store, had been allowed to go to ruin, and one that was hastily scraped together by private loyalty disbanded as soon as provisions ran short. The army was summoned up north to meet the invasion of a foreign king and an English earl, and when Harold turned south again, with his thinned ranks, the two northern earls refused to follow him. And so his tactical and strategical skill went for nothing, and all he and his followers could do for their country was to die. After this the whole realm was defenceless to slavery, and though risings might break out in this or that part of the country, they were sectional and spasmodic, easy for the conqueror to stamp out in detail. London, the most important of the towns, was ready to throw open her gates and obtain favourable terms on her own behalf. In short, the England of Harold hardly deserved to be called a nation at all, though a keen eye might have detected the germs of nationality.

"Self-reliance in great and small alike," says Bishop Stubbs, "without self-restraint, without the power of combination, with a national pride and yet no national spirit, laid England an easy, though unwilling, prey at the feet of the Conqueror."

The coming of the Normans seemed to have quenched

any spark of patriotism there might have been. The invaders themselves can have been no strangers to the feeling, for we know how they marched into action to the strains of the "Chanson de Roland," which is intoxicated with the love of France. The last wish of Roland is that his country may not suffer dishonour, his last thought is of his sweet land. But the conquest tended to kill patriotism in the invaders, as it did in the conquered. William was holding down a sullen and humiliated people by means of a foreign garrison. He planted castles all over the land, for much the same reason as Lord Kitchener covered the Dutch republics with blockhouses, the difference being that the castle was intended to be an abiding habitation, and martial law a permanent system of government.

The Normans were not as ready to become Englishmen, as their forefathers had been to become Frenchmen. They had every reason for treating the English with the contempt due to an inferior civilization. Of their spirit we can judge with as direct a certainty as if we could see, with our own eyes, Lanfranc celebrating Mass, or William hunting the tall deer amid the glades of the New Forest. For those were days in which men put their thoughts into stone more than into books, and architecture, instead of being merely a decorative art, as nowadays, was a real and most eloquent language, capable of expressing the aspirations, and even the humour of nations. The Norman had caught something not only of the form, but of the spirit of old Rome. To beauty he was no doubt keenly sensitive, but it was a beauty held in subordination to the demands of the will. To playfulness he rarely condescended, to softness never; his was the stern and deliberate arch propped up on mighty columns, that scorned to barter strength for delicacy, for in more than a literal sense, the Norman buildings are silent. It was an imperial architecture, in days when Empire had not

yet been yoked with Liberty. By this we understand how it was that the noblest of the Normans was renowned for his "starkness," and how one of the worst of them, the suave, relentless Robert de Belesme, did not hesitate to tear out the eyes of a child hostage with his own nails.

If we are to believe in a guiding providence that controls the destinies of nations, we should nowhere find a more beneficent instance of its operation than in the Norman Conquest. The English nation was dying for lack of discipline, and this was just what the Normans were qualified to give. It is possible that if the English had not broken their ranks, with a hot-headed rashness which the Normans, not only in England but in Sicily, knew how to provoke and turn to account in their foes, Senlac Hill might have been held. The slovenliness of the native Englishman, alike in Church and State, was rightly intolerable to his conquerors, and this William and his successors set themselves to purge. The contempt of Norman for Englishman died hard. When Henry I married a Saxon princess, the courtiers named them Godric and Godiva, and one of Cœur de Lion's favourite oaths was, "Do you take me for an Englishman?"

It is a favourite, and not very profitable inquiry, to what extent the Conquest was responsible for the introduction of feudalism. It is more than likely that if England had been left to herself, she would have broken up into several loosely compacted fiefs or earldoms, owing a more or less shadowy allegiance to some nominal overlord. This was what became of the "sweet France" of Roland, and Harold had found, even before he formally ascended the throne, that the disruptive forces were too strong for him to curb. Besides, the tendency to feudalization was European, and it is difficult to see how England could have escaped its influence. But for its

formal and definite establishment as a system of government, the Conquest must be held responsible. It was the Conqueror who established tenure by knight-service.

The essence of feudalism is the negation of patriotism. The bond which held together lord and vassal was personal, and based upon the ownership of land. A kingdom was regarded not as a state, but as an estate, and one of the most disconcerting features of medieval history, is the way in which the demands of policy are continually being subordinated to personal considerations. We find the ablest of statesmen building empires, and then splitting them up among their children, and thus not only pulling to pieces their own work, but directly causing the most bloody and profitless of wars. Whole provinces are given away as dowries, in the same spirit as the bride's father presents a cheque nowadays. The futility of the feudal military system may be gauged by the ridiculous obligation imposed upon a knight, to serve his lord for forty days in the year, and no more. It need hardly be a matter of surprise that under such conditions decisive battles were rare. Again, when applied with thoroughgoing consistency, it made the unit of loyalty not the state, but the fief.

A mere oath of fealty, without the sanction of force to back it, was powerless to bind an unruly baron, and the spirit of these magnates is contained in the rhyme:

> "Nor king nor prince am I;
> I am the lord of Couçy."

When the Earl Warenne was asked, in the reign of Edward I, by what title he held his franchises, he produced an old and rusty sword, saying that this was his warranty, for William the Bastard had not conquered the land without the help and partnership of the Earl's ancestors. This turbulent and disruptive pride was the greatest of all hindrances to the unity of nations.

The political theory of the time easily lent itself to feudalism. Its tendency was to regard the whole world as one spiritual unity, but at the same time to treat every subordinate member as a little world in itself, and therefore as possessed of a spiritual dignity not inferior to that of the macrocosmus itself. This doctrine, though sublime, is obviously a dangerous weapon in the hands of one, who chooses to regard his commune or fief as a self-sufficing and practically independent unit, only bound to the macrocosm by the shadowiest of ties.

In many parts of Europe this system prevailed with hardly any qualification, except such as was provided by the Church. In Germany only the semblance of unity survived the Hohenstaufen, and the heir of the Cæsars was generally a titular chief among a swarm of rivals over whom he did not pretend to exercise control. In France the patriotism of Roland slumbered for centuries, until the process began which was to culminate in the concentration beneath the palace roof at Versailles of the nobility of France; for the forces of disunion were so strong that they compelled the Line of Capet to forge the engine of despotism which caused, and survived, its own downfall. But we have to thank our Norman and Angevin kings, that the worst effects of feudalism were not felt in England, and that, in spite of painful tackings, she finally succeeded in steering clear alike of anarchy and despotism.

We need not follow their policy in detail. Its keynote was given by William's master-stroke of summoning to a meeting at Salisbury "all the landowning men of property there were over all England, whose soever men they were, and all bowed down to him and became his men, and swore oaths of fealty to him that they would be faithful to him against all other men." It has been contended that as a practical measure the effect of this

has been exaggerated; but as a manifesto of the central power, a declaration of a policy consistently pursued by William and his successors, the Salisbury oath merits all the importance that has been assigned to it. William prevented the accumulation of big, connected fiefs under single owners, and where he gave lands, he gave them scattered, except in the exceptional case of the Lords of the Marches. Thus, from the very first, the hand of the King was heavy upon the nobles, and a central power took shape which, except for the interlude of Stephen's reign, was to go on developing in experience and complexity under his successors. It is no wonder that some of the more adventurous barons preferred to carve out for themselves Irish possessions, where the hand of the King could not easily touch them.

Thus was England saved from the plague of disunion which ravaged her neighbours. The magnates, as a class, were destined to give infinite trouble, and even to bring her healthy development to a standstill, but there was at no time any danger of her being split up into provinces, as almost certainly would have been her fate if the Saxon monarchy had conquered at Hastings. Forces were already at work, which were to blend the foreign garrison with the subject population into one self-conscious whole, and make the unity, which was imposed from the outside, gradually become implicit and spiritual.

The Norman baron was little inclined to own his kinship with a people he despised. He was hardly touched by considerations of patriotism, and if he had owned to a Motherland, it would have been Normandy or France. But ere the first generation of conquerors had passed away, causes were at work which were, in course of time, to make this barrier between Norman and Englishman a thing of the past. Curiously enough, it was one of the very incidents of feudalism which notably

contributed to this end. For the Conqueror, though the foremost statesman of his age, did not hesitate to pull his own fabric to pieces, by leaving England to one son and Normandy to another. The uneasy union was, indeed, patched up again under a third son; but twenty years of war and separation had tended to decrease the number of barons holding estates in both lands, and to weaken the tie which bound the Anglo-Norman baron to the land of his fathers. When, a hundred years later, the bond was snapped once and for all, the barons had already ceased to regard themselves as foreigners, and a De Burgh or a De Montfort was as thoroughgoing an Englishman as Alfred himself. Intermarriage had blurred and often obliterated the old rigid distinctions.

While the Norman strain was thus being continuously weakened as a separate factor in the national being, the old Saxon spirit, which had been well-nigh broken by William, was not dead. It had received a smashing blow, and such literature or beginnings of art as there were before Hastings, seemed to have been rooted out altogether. The educated class regarded the native tongue as only fit for boors, and in the centres of learning and in the greater part of the monasteries it went out altogether. The result of this process was apparent in the language itself. All the finer shades of meaning, all but the rough and ready medium of everyday conversation, went out of use. And so, when the vernacular came gradually back, it was necessary to borrow freely from the Latin tongues, in order to make good its deficiencies. During the period of transition the literature of the upper class was cosmopolitan, after the manner of feudalism. Minstrels of chivalry and romance were able to wander without let over the greater part of polite Europe; their stock of legends, and even the language in which they were sung, were common property. It was while they were reading the tale of Launce-

lot and Guinevere, that Paolo kissed Francesca on the mouth.

While the English language was in abeyance, inhabitants of this island were establishing her position in the forefront of European culture. In all the lore of the Middle Ages, England was hardly second even to Italy. But these triumphs were in the sphere of thought, and not of letters in the strict sense of the word. In the "doctor subtilis" of Merton College, St. Thomas might find an opponent worthy his steel, but without a language and without the glow of a mature patriotism there could be no rival for Dante.

Saxon institutions shared much the same fate as the language. They were roughly handled, but there was no absolute breach of continuity. In the country districts, for instance, it is improbable that the new lords understood, or wanted to understand, the finer distinctions in methods of land tenure, and there seems to have been a general levelling down in the direction of villeinage. But it did not suit the Conqueror's policy to destroy more than was necessary, for he regarded himself as the lawful heir of the English kings, and it was more convenient to make use of the customs he found established, than to improvise or transport new ones. He and his successors had soon an additional motive for fostering native institutions, for after the first risings had been suppressed, the real danger to the Crown came not from the people, but from the magnates. And hence we find the Red King calling out the old shire levy against his rebel barons. The central government, which had been the weak point of the old system, was indeed practically reconstituted, and gradually extended its power over local franchises; but the old machinery of shire and hundred was preserved, if not intact, at least without revolutionary change.

It was upon the towns, or big villages dignified with

that name, that the Conquest had least permanent effect, in spite of the havoc wrought amongst them during its first few years. London, in particular, survived intact, and such was its importance, that the hostility of its citizens was largely responsible for the failure of Matilda after Lincoln. In the reign of Henry I begins the series of royal charters to towns, and even earlier than this we find the first mention of a gild merchant. Thus England came to be dotted with a number of little communities, each realizing to some extent the scholastic idea of a microcosmus. As yet they only comprised a fraction of the whole population—according to the estimate of Professor Ashley a hundred and fifty thousand out of a million and a half—but their importance in the national development was out of all proportion to their numbers. They were to provide an element of strength no less essential to permanent greatness, than the splendour and discipline of chivalry. For the military and industrial factors bear the same relation to one another, as the fighting force and the transport of a modern army. Spain was an army that neglected its transport, and even the decline and fall of Rome may perhaps be traced to this cause. Holland, on the other hand, was a nation that weakened its fighting force for the sake of wealth.

At the time of which we are writing, England's industrial greatness only existed in embryo. A certain amount of trade had been carried on even before the Conquest, but it had been in raw materials—as far at least as exports were concerned—and especially in the wool which for many years to come was to be the staple product of British industry. This was at present sent abroad for foreign artisans to work up, and hence we find a trading class coming into existence, before industry had advanced beyond the crude methods and requirements of family life. A gild merchant, or association of traders, was the first form of business organization, and we have evidence

of its existence in the majority of the towns, though in some of the most important, including London, it does not appear. It is in the twelfth century that we first hear of associations of artisans, or craft gilds, beginning with such necessary functions as those of baker and weaver, though as yet English cloth was a poor and coarse product. But in this trade in wool is first exemplified a truth, which has held good, with a strange persistency, from the Middle Ages to our own century—that the key to England's foreign policy is the Netherlands.

We have spoken of the early medieval town as a microcosmus, and we may look upon it as a kind of corporate fief. It tended to be self-sufficient, and was more occupied with its own interests than those of the whole community. The gilds merchant and municipal bodies carried on independent negotiations with those of other towns; they had their own protective tariffs, which were modified by a series of treaties similar to those which are now concluded between sovereign powers. In such negotiations national barriers counted for little. "The Norwich man," says Dr. Cunningham, "who visited London was as much of a foreigner there as the man from Bruges or Rouen. . . . we find the same sort of communications sent to the Bailiff and Good Folk of Gloucester as went to the Échevins of Sluys." Such a state of things tended to produce a number of petty patriotisms, local and exclusive, but capable of being some day fused into a higher unity.

The Crown exercised the same restraining influence over this burgher exclusiveness, as over the great barons. In neither case was the feudal idea allowed to run to its logical extreme. By this means two dangers were avoided which the experience of Continental nations, and even of Scotland, showed to be inherent in the medieval town system. The English towns never had the chance to break away altogether from the Government, to raise their

own troops, make their own laws, and carry on bloody struggles with each other. The power of the Crown was always above them; we find Henry II, for instance, levying a general fine upon all illegal gilds, and the repeated and highly esteemed charters are by themselves evidence how dependent were the towns for their privileges upon royal favour. It is thus that the way was prepared for De Montfort's memorable policy of recognizing a burgher, or merchant interest, as a factor to be reckoned with in the Constitution, and for the subsequent pursuit by Edward I and Edward III of a definite national policy in respect of industry.

In yet another direction the policy of the Crown was working for patriotism. The military system of pure feudalism was obviously inefficient to the last degree, and conducive neither to discipline nor decisive victory. Moreover the Conqueror himself had gone far to rob it of such merit as it tended to foster, by his wise policy of impairing the efficiency of the fief as a military unit. It is surprising how soon the victors allowed themselves to be ruled by the military ideas of the vanquished. Already, at Tenchebrai, an English king was leading his knights, dismounted after the Saxon model, to conquer a Duke of Normandy, a victory in which William of Malmesbury saw the avenging of Hastings. The Battle of the Standard was the triumph of an army mainly English, employing English dismounted tactics and proving, for the first time, the potency of the English bow. They had rallied at the summons of their northern Archbishop to repel a Scottish invasion. "It is the last time," says Freeman, "when, in an harangue addressed to an army which is described as English, an appeal is made to Norman feelings and to the pride of Norman exploits." Not only did the Normans adopt Saxon methods, but the old fyrd, the shire militia which had fought under Alfred and Harold, was not allowed to

decay. Under the Red King, it was used against the rebel magnates, and disgracefully swindled into the bargain.

There lurked a danger in the break-up of the feudal system, lest the levy of knights should come to be replaced by hired and foreign mercenaries. Such bands were becoming increasingly common on the Continent, and many of Harold's old followers had enlisted in the service of the Byzantine Emperor. The most notorious of the mercenaries were the Brabançons, ruffians of the worst stamp, but formidable fighters. Such bands had been employed by the Norman kings, especially by Stephen in his civil wars, and their expulsion was the first work of Henry II. Their excesses helped to confirm among the English a hatred of mercenaries, as deep-seated as that of standing armies in a later era. According to the old rhyme, a medieval predecessor of Lillibullero, these mercenaries were supposed to sing to each other:

"Hop, hop, Willekin, hop!
England is thine and mine!"

Under Henry II we see all three systems at work. On one of his French campaigns he employed the whole feudal levy, but this was an exceptional measure. He preferred to levy scutage, or money commutation for knight service from his vassals. With this money he was able to hire mercenaries for his foreign campaigns. But he faithfully kept his implied pledge not to employ them in England, except upon one occasion when he brought them over for less than a month, to deal with two rebel earls who had, with the support of the Count of Flanders, introduced a large Flemish army to back up their own rebellion.

Henry's great work, from the military point of view, was the Assize of Arms, by which he reorganized the national militia. He had proved its use and loyalty during the rebellion of 1173, and hence, eight years later, we find

him proclaiming the duty of every freeman to provide himself with arms according to his means. This was a notable act of trust in the people, very different from the policy of a later age, which aimed at keeping arms out of their hands, though, as a modern writer shrewdly observes, it did not extend to providing prospective poachers with bows. It was, in fact, the policy of the Crown to ally itself with the folk, in opposition to the magnates, and not the least beneficent of its results was to draw country and town together, for free burgher and free cultivator stood shoulder to shoulder in the same levy, under the command of the sheriff. And that the sheriffs themselves might not get out of hand, Henry took the precaution of dismissing them all at once, and replacing them for the most part by his own officials. But for his wars in France, where the militia was not available, he employed such feudatories as he could get together, and a great host of solidarii, or soldiers, which he hired where he could.

The hatred of foreign mercenaries was deeply rooted, and John's employment of such aid did not serve to diminish it. One of the provisions of Magna Carta is that foreign troops shall be sent out of the realm, and thus the way is prepared for the system which made our arms glorious during the Hundred Years' War—a national army of paid troops. For the feudal levy was already obsolescent, and the employment of free companies as in Italy was barred by the growing prejudice of the nation.

A more difficult problem remains to be considered as regards the influence exercised by the Church in fostering or retarding patriotism. For not only in theory, but in practice, was the spiritual power of paramount importance during the Middle Ages. How intimately this power was felt, will hardly be realized from a perusal of ordinary histories, which naturally tend to dwell on the salient incidents of statesmanship; but the chronicles themselves,

together with the literature of the time, show how saturated was the medieval mind by its religion. It must be remembered that the Church exercised a considerable practical jurisdiction over the lives of the people—we read, for instance, how Bishop Grosseteste, on assuming his episcopate, undertook throughout his see such reforms as the abolition of the Festival of All Fools. There are two aspects in which we may regard the Church—first, as the agent of a foreign power, an *imperium in imperio*, draining the country of money, and making government impossible; or again, a spiritual and democratic force, educating and protecting the poor man, and providing the one ladder by which he or his sons might conceivably rise even to the highest dignity in Christendom. And certainly each of these aspects displays one face of the truth, though the sectarian bias by which Church history is befogged has too often tended to exaggerate one to the exclusion of the other.

It was a true theory that regarded the functions of medieval Church and State as mutually complementary. After the collapse of Roman civilization, from its own inherent defects, a stern and prolonged ordeal awaited the savage hordes who aspired to build a nobler edifice upon its ruins. For this a twofold discipline was necessary, one of force, from the outside, and one of the spirit, from within. In England, this discipline of force was applied by the Crown, a central power in continual struggle with lawless and rebellious feudatories. But spiritual force the Crown could not, and did not, exert, and the best Norman and Angevin kings wielded power in the spirit of the Kratos and Bia, who nailed Prometheus to the Caucasus. Stark and pitiless, they held together the realm in their own interests, crushing down opposition with hammer blows, and welding the nation together as the smith forges iron. Death and torture and mutilation, the fair northern fields wasted and blackened from the Humber to the Tees, the

land covered with castles and, again, castles by the hundred pulled stone from stone, the trial by battle and the ghastly ordeal, were the machinery by which the royal power was maintained. For we must observe both in the temporal and spiritual spheres, that it is the crudest and most animal passions that call for subjection. The unregulated strength that bursts forth into excesses at once terrible and childish, is characteristic of the age. A King of England who throws himself foaming upon the floor and bites the rushes, monks who knock down and dance upon an archbishop, are no extraordinary spectacles. This is a fact too often overlooked in estimating the policy of the Church. The severity of the asceticism which she enjoined was calculated to enforce the very discipline of which the medieval man was most in need, to bring the body, even by " peine forte et dure," under control of the mind, and thus to cleave the first steps of a path towards higher spiritual levels.

While the State was disciplining its subjects by force, it was the province of the Church to establish a more intimate connection with each individual soul, and so to mould and purify character as to transform the " blond beast " into a civilized and Christian member of society. It must not be imagined that even in her best days, she succeeded in more than a very imperfect and too human fashion, and under the circumstances it is a miracle of divine providence that she succeeded at all. Her ministers were not drawn from a superior civilization, but from the very folk among whom their work lay. In the darkness and anarchy which followed upon the break-up of Charlemagne's empire, the Church herself was very nearly borne under. Her very Popes were often ignorant ruffians, without even the grandeur that redeemed a Borgia or Rovere; simony was everywhere rampant, and the very tyrants whom she was appointed to curb lorded it over the Bride of Christ.

Happily her foundations had been laid firmly before the storm burst. The modern mind is little fitted to appreciate the worth of those, who planted the perilous path of Christian orthodoxy between Gnosticism and Arianism, with all their kindred heresies. Perhaps the greatest, because the subtlest, danger to the faith had been averted by her Augustines and Athanasius, and she was left free to battle, amid circumstances of incredible difficulty, with the wild and unruly passions of feudalism. Her sons proved themselves not unworthy of their calling. Out of the darkest hour of the dark age was born the light of Cluny, a new zeal was beginning to flutter through churches and monasteries, and finally the revival found a champion in the towering personality of Hildebrand. Praise or blame these men as we will, at least we cannot deny the singleness of purpose by which many of them were actuated, nor the nobility of the cause for which they stood.

It must be admitted that the influence of the Church was, in many respects, anti-national. The political theory of the Middle Ages embraced both a temporal and a spiritual power that should be world-wide. At the same time, we must not forget the vast and shadowy patriotism of Christianity. All along the line, from the great bulwark of Constantinople in the East to the Pillars of Hercules in the West, Europe had been fighting on the defensive against the successive waves of Islam. Her right wing had been crushed, driven back into the mountain fortresses of Leon and Navarre; on her left the Eastern Empire had been stripped of its fairest provinces; even in the centre the island outposts of Sicily and Sardinia passed for a while into the hands of the enemy. Only by two decisive victories against fearful odds, at Tours in the West and Constantinople in the East, had the tide been prevented from submerging all Europe.

Nor might it have seemed as if such a consummation

were altogether undesirable. While the greater part of Europe was plunged in darkness and gross ignorance, the Mohammedan civilization was at its height, in all its wealth and magnificence. It was, like the Arab character, a hot-blooded, unsubstantial thing, faithfully reflected in the lascivious dream-colouring of the Arabian Nights, and rioting in the fantastic and brittle architecture of which the Alhambra is the most splendid product. Sudden and terrible in action, dignified in repose, it lacked the concentration of purpose, the moral stamina of the West; it had not behind it the imperial tradition of Rome nor the eternal truth of Christianity. It was well that it should fail. And in addition to the forces of Islam, other heathen were pressing on the German frontiers of Christianity; the true faith was still the most perilous of adventures, and Christendom a fortress compassed about by many enemies.

It is the Cluniac revival that may be said to mark the turning of the tide. From the latter part of the tenth century Christendom begins to gather herself together and take the offensive; the spirit is awakened that centres round the Papacy, and rises to a height in the early crusading movement. It is remarkable to what an extent the solidarity of the faithful was recognized on both sides. The great waves of Mohammedan enthusiasm that swept from the Ganges to the Atlantic, and whose rise and fall, though less tempestuous, is not unknown even to our own age, called forth something like a response in kind. With curiously mixed motives, volunteers would flock to Spain to help their brethren and themselves, or perhaps exchange the service against the Saracen, for war against the heathen on the German marches. As the prophet had promised his paradise to all who fell fighting against the Infidel; as the Moslem commander had hurled his troops at the breaches with "Paradise is before you, Hell and all the devils behind," so the Popes promised

absolution from sins to the crusaders, and thus opened a path to salvation, not through mortification of the flesh, but through bloodshed and plunder. So complex was a faith that could combine the chivalry of Europe in such a tremendous enterprise as the first crusade, that could send poor men and little children in their thousands to certain destruction, that could produce such an order as the Templars or such a knight as Godfrey de Bouillon! In nine crusades the forces of Christendom were hurled as vainly against the East, as those of the East had been against Christendom.

We must be on our guard against the word "cosmopolitan" as applied to an allegiance that overflowed national boundaries, and was the common property of Catholic Europe. It would be much nearer to the facts to say that the phantom of old Rome still walked abroad, that the Eternal City, reinforced by the Eternal Church, still kept up the struggle against encroaching barbarism all along her long line of frontier. Yet was the bond that held Europe together not the sword of Cæsar, but an imperialism of the spirit, whose strength varied with the need for a united Christendom. The most glorious epoch of the Papacy was that which coincided with the great counter-attack of the Cross upon the Crescent, and the anachronism of the Hildebrandine ideal was apparent when the second Frederick, the herald of a new age, made a mock of the crusading spirit by peacefully negotiating the cession of Jerusalem.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, especially, this common consciousness of Christianity was at its height, militating everywhere against the growing national consciousness. But England, far away in the north-west, was less sensible of the common need, and less susceptible of Romanization. Of the temporal sword she had no need, and the Empire of the Hohenstaufen, which ruined Germany by grasping after Italy, affects her scarcely at

all. It is the coming of the Norman that makes her practically a member of the European state system, and brings her within the sphere of the Hildebrandine revival. And yet the Conqueror, who had fought under the gonfanon and with the blessing of Holy Church, was by no means minded to be her slave. Though he took the important step of separating the ecclesiastical from the lay jurisdiction, he was no less determined than Henry VIII to be master in his own house. And this, by the tact and friendship of Lanfranc and with the tacit assent of the Church, he contrived to be, and the contest of Crown and Church was postponed.

The problem stood upon a different footing in Norman times, from that of a later age. It is conceivable that an irresistible tyrant, fighting for his own hand, might be of service to the nation, but out of the mere physical dialectic of selfish interests untempered by any spiritual influence, the best that can arise is a cruel and hollow military empire. The Church had a work to perform which even the Conqueror could not attempt. She was able to get into touch with the common folk, and within her pale the poorest of them had a chance of developing his personality. The awful sanctions with which she was armed were the one power, except the sheer might of the Crown, capable of curbing the tough will of the feudal baron, and this influence could be exercised in favour of the downtrodden Saxon.

The Conqueror had, it is true, filled her higher offices with Normans, but this had little more effect on the essentially popular character of the priesthood than, in a later age, was exercised by the Whig bishops upon the Tory parsons of the first two Georges. How much this was recognized by the people themselves may be judged from the perusal of almost any one of the chronicles. Anselm was beloved of the poor, and moved about even amongst robbers with impunity, while as for Becket the

people greeted him upon his return to Canterbury with almost divine honours, crying with one voice, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." It is during the anarchy of Stephen's reign, that the opposition between the Church and the barons is most plainly revealed. Hers was an uphill fight against their tyranny. "Christ and his saints are asleep," was the pathetic cry that went up from the victims of oppression, and the Saxon chronicler tells how the bishops and clergy cursed the tyrants again and again—without effect.

Florence of Worcester narrates how, in dread of the approaching sack of the town, the folk of Worcester piled the church full of their household goods, but such protection was too often of no avail, for as Henry of Huntingdon sings:

> "Churches in vain, and holy ground,
> Which erst religion fenced around,
> Open their gates to shelter those,
> Who refuge seek from bloody foes,
> The monks and nuns, a helpless train,
> Are plundered, tortured, ravished, slain.'

One of these barons is described for us by William of Malmesbury, Robert Fitzherbert, who boasted that he had burnt twenty-four monks in a church, and meant to grieve God by a like exploit upon Malmesbury and Wilton. If by some rare chance a prisoner escaped his hands untortured, and thanked him in God's name, he would mutter, "Never let God owe me any thanks." Such were the men, and such the passions, that the medieval Church had to tame.

It was therefore imperative upon her that she should get a free hand. The chief danger that she had to face was lest her own organization should get into the power of the class she wanted to control, and that the bishop should be no better than a wolf amongst wolves, in

T. Forester's Translation.

sheep's clothing. Hence we may understand the horror excited in the breasts of her most zealous sons, by the sin of Simon Magus, for which the very successors of Peter were found burning head downwards in Inferno. And it was with this evil, which was honeycombing the Church and rendering her powerless for good, that Hildebrand set himself to grapple. His policy was to take the appointment of ecclesiastical dignities out of the hands of laymen, and to remove one of the most potent causes of simony, by stopping the marriage of the clergy. The storm aroused by these claims was averted, for a time, by the strong hand of the Conqueror and the tact of Lanfranc, and things worked as well as could be expected; but with the advent of Rufus—a tyrant and a thief who feared neither God nor man—the case for the Church became overwhelming. The compromise finally arrived at between Anselm and the Red King's successor must be acknowledged as just and honourable to both parties.

Upon the struggle between Becket and Henry II it is more difficult to pass judgment. A modern historian who talks of Becket as if he were a lonely patriot struggling for the rights of the people, is exaggerating one side of the case as grossly as Froude exaggerates the other. There can be no doubt that Becket was impracticable and obstinate to the last degree, and his contention that anybody who had taken even minor orders might put himself outside the pale of the law was the negation of settled government. But to treat Henry as a patriot king, contending for the integrity of his realm against a foreign power, is equally absurd. By birth and policy he was more than half a foreigner, and an Angevin bureaucracy, if it had been successfully established, would have been a polity hardly less " stark " for Englishmen than that of the Conqueror. The sympathies of the people were on the side of the Archbishop, for whom, living and dead, they showed extraordinary devotion. In some vague way

they recognized that the cause of the Church was that of the masses, and that some mitigation, even were it illogical and arbitrary, of the wholesale hangings and mutilations, was a step in the right direction.

We must beware of a too partisan judgment. Both Church and Crown had a necessary work to perform, and each naturally tried to extend the sphere of its activity. Had either of them prevailed altogether, the result would have been disastrous. It has been well said that the most intensely tragic situation results, not from a conflict of wrongs, but from a conflict of rights, and Henry, as the representative of the civil power and the defender of ancient customs, is as deserving of our respect, as the champion and martyr of the high Hildebrandine ideal. But it was no ambitious and worldly schemer who tortured himself terribly, and yet donned the robes of outward magnificence, that his sufferings might not be seen of men, and those of us whose sympathies go out to "the old warrior," need not be less generous than Henry himself, before the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

But the conditions of the problem were changing, and the need for an independent Church was becoming yearly less urgent. As long as the central government retained the Norman tradition of a foreign power lording it over an inferior race—and this idea was never quite absent from the polity of the early Angevins—the struggle for ecclesiastical freedom, even when backed up by Rome, made for national independence. But the more national became the civil power, the more sensitive did Englishmen become to anti-national tendencies on the part of the Church.

For if the royal power was stark and alien in its sympathies, it made amends by fostering the growth of that toughest and most distinctively national of our institutions—the English Common Law. The tremendous

strength of the central power enabled it not only to crush the disruptive tendencies of feudalism, but also to impose its own rule, in the strictest sense of the word, upon its subjects, a custom of justice that became so much a part of the national being, as to take on a vitality of its own, impervious alike to the will of the monarch and the ardour of reformers, a very jungle of our liberties.

From the earliest times, reverence for the law had been characteristic of Englishmen. The great kings before the Conquest had been lawgivers, or rather codifiers of custom, and Alfred was no less renowned for the peace he established throughout his realm, than for his resistance to the foreigner. When Edward the Confessor came to be idealized as the last of the good old Saxon kings, it was for his supposed laws that he was most gratefully remembered. But the Saxon law, with its quaint and archaic formalism and its rudimentary notions of justice, was not fitted to become the source of a great legal system, and even though the Norman kings deliberately safeguarded it and attempts were made to state it in coherent form, it was rapidly passing away under the new regime. The central power was becoming all in all, and this, with its foreign tongue and contempt for the native Saxon, was not likely to be influenced overmuch by the ideas of Godric and Godiva.

If we watch the gradual development of our legal institutions, we shall realize that the prime objective of the Crown was not justice, but power. The first of the courts to take definite form is the Royal Exchequer. The first use of the jury, an institution of French origin, is not to decide suits or present criminals, but to ascertain the royal dues, as in Domesday Book. But with such able and systematic monarchs as the first two Henries, the idea of justice follows inevitably from that of power. It is but a logical continuation of the Conqueror's policy of bringing all landowners into direct allegiance to himself,

that the royal courts shall be thrown open to all subjects; that the new owner of a property, whose lord has dispossessed him for the default of some due, shall be able to obtain a writ of *mort d'ancestor*, and, supposing a jury decide that he is the lawful heir, turn out the lord, due or no due. In the hands of an able monarch, justice becomes a powerful and remorseless engine, working through the forms of feudalism to crush its disruptive tendencies; and in making his law felt all over the realm, Henry Plantagenet was taking the surest means of establishing his authority against the "devils and wicked men," whose castles he had pulled down at the beginning of his reign.

It is unlikely that he realized how surely, in establishing the rule of the Crown over its subjects, he was setting up a power that in the course of time would prove mightier than the Crown itself. For though Henry did not pretend to be an irresponsible judge, or otherwise than the administrator of an existing law, for many purposes his will was decisive. The law was still young and flexible enough to take his impress readily; the King was president of his own court, and it needs little acquaintance with Henry's character or the records of his time, to realize that his control was both able and imperious. He could and did create new legal processes of vital importance by the issue of new writs, and so necessary was his presence considered to be, that suitors were compelled to follow him about France, in default of obtaining a writ from the justiciar at home. The idea of a case-made law, broadening down from precedent to precedent, and fettered straitly by its own past, was yet in the future.

But so well had "the old warrior" done his work, that the law was already becoming strong enough to stand by itself. The first of our great English law-books bears the name of one of his counsellors. While the Poitevin King was fighting the battle for Christendom—but not for

England—in Palestine, it was found that the machinery of justice was able to work smoothly and automatically in his absence. Events were moving with extreme rapidity, and when the whole flimsy structure of the Angevin Empire collapsed before the arms of Philip Augustus, the magnates had got to be Englishmen or nothing. The tyranny and misfortunes of the wicked Lackland did even more to cement the realm than the strong arm of his father. But so strong was the system of government and the personal character that John had inherited, that but for the disaster of Bouvines, his tyranny might have been successful. The defeat of the tyrant abroad was the opportunity of his subjects at home; the three most important classes in the realm—barons, clergy and citizens—joined hands, and the result was Magna Carta. England for the first time spoke as a nation.

There is no need to indulge in uncritical eulogy of the Charter or its authors. The magnates were yet to be the curse of the realm for three centuries, and it is not conceivable that they should, in this one instance, have been actuated by a pure unselfish patriotism. The greatness of the Charter was less in its intention, than its results. The more closely we examine its provisions, the more clearly we see that it was meant to be a feudal reaction. The practical sovereignty was put, at least for a time, into the hands of a Committee of Barons. The democratic provisions turn out to be far from democratic in intention, a strengthening of the anarchic and disruptive forces, that the Conqueror and the two Henries had laboured to subdue.

But if these were the intentions of the Charter, its practical effects were of a much wider and more beneficent scope, and render it not unworthy to be accounted, as it was, the corner-stone of our liberties. For considering that the barons were dictating their own terms, the wonder

is not that they checked the central power, but that they accepted it as a whole, and left it pruned, but substantially intact. If they weakened the force of the law in some respects, they provided it also with its greatest triumph, for they put it definitely above the king. They proceeded upon the feudal assumption, which even the proudest king would not have denied in the abstract, that the obligations of lord and vassal are reciprocal, and in case the king were to set at naught his part of the compact, means were provided for his coercion. What the royal power did in respect of the magnates, the Charter did in respect of the king. And hence, while the feudal aspect of the Charter tends to recede with the decay of feudalism, there emerges from it the conception of an impersonal and majestic law, dominating king and subject alike.

Whatever history may discover about the motives of the barons, the Charter itself remains on record not only as a document, grand in its conception and noble in its expression, but as a manifesto of English principles and English character. Perhaps this may be due to the influence of the patriot Archbishop, for whom the country had been put under an interdict, and who was to incur the punishment of suspension rather than support a foreign usurper. When, after the lapse of more than five centuries, the great classic of English law came to be written, no clearer statement could be found of the three fundamental rights of every Englishman—to the security of his person, the freedom of his actions and the possession of his property—than in the concise and final words of Runnymede. And this stubborn insistence upon the rights of the subject, though in their first intention these may have implied no more than the rights of feudal magnates, is what distinguishes English law from Roman, and makes it so impervious to the tyranny of a central power.

The Roman Empire of the great jurists and the Codes

was a bureaucracy on an enormous scale, imposing one logical and unvarying law on all peoples, nations and languages, from the Wall of Hadrian to the boundaries of Parthia. It pursued uniformity, what in modern phrase is called the triumph of ideas, to the destruction of liberty. "What pleases the prince," Ulpian lays down, "has the force of law," and the Code declares it to be of the nature of sacrilege to oppose one of his rescripts. The instrument constructed upon these principles has naturally proved most convenient to despots, from the days of the Cæsars to those of Napoleon and elected majorities. It is like the Roman architecture, massive, stoical, imperious, a strength that crushes earthwards but knows not how to aspire.

Whereas English law is essentially Gothic. It proceeds from the bottom upwards. Its classic documents are assertions of liberties as against the central power, not the abstract rights of man, but definite and prescriptive liberties of Englishmen. And hence "the first ground and chief cornerstone of the laws of England," is, as Blackstone informs us, "general immemorial custom or common law, from time to time declared in the decisions of the courts of justice." This is the exact opposite to the logical and generalizing spirit of Rome. And it is characteristically Gothic that the history of our law should be one of continual struggle and resistance; that the royal power, like a buttress, should meet the centrifugal thrust of feudalism, and that out of a diversity of such contests should proceed the final unity. It takes the old Carolingian inquest, a device thoroughly in harmony with Roman bureaucracy, and transforms it into the English jury. The very discovery that the barons were not solicitous for abstract principles, but for particular rights of their own which they thought had been violated, makes their action more English than ever, and for that reason a claim which had originally emanated from one

class alone, gets quite imperceptibly transferred to the whole body of citizens.

The edifice of law that sprang up as a result of these forces may be likened to one of those New Forest oaks, old and gnarled and twisted in every limb, yet rooted so deep in the soil that it does not bend before the utmost fury of the hurricane. As the Roman law was the tool of a Napoleon, so the English law was the despair even of a Cromwell. It must be regarded as one of the earliest, and certainly one of the greatest permanent achievements of the English nation. At a time when our Continental neighbours had not yet emerged from the welter of feudalism, England had built up a law of her own, triumphantly expressive of her personality, and already enshrined in authoritative treatises. That law was to persist without a break until it had spread first over the British Isles, and then over the Empire of India and the continents of Australia and North America; a system which need fear no comparison with that of Rome. And its motto is not "Regere imperio gentes" but "imperium et libertas."

Nor were the English long in recognizing the value of their achievement. Within twenty years of the signing of the Charter we find the assembled barons meeting the encroachments of Roman Canon law with their unanimous "*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare*—we will not change the laws of England." As Professor Maitland has suggested, such unanimity upon a mere point of bastardy law would have been most unlikely if there had not been a patriotic principle also at stake. Again, so firmly had the main contention of the Charter been established, that we find it laid down in Bracton that "the king also hath a superior, namely God, and also the law, by which he was made king."

The Roman civil law had come and gone. Vacarius had brought it to Oxford in the reign of Stephen,

and it had flourished vigorously for a while, to the no small enrichment of English law in its most critical and formative period. But Roman law was not native to the soil, it died out as quickly as it arose, and one of Henry III's first acts of obedience to the Pope was to forbid its study in London. The Roman Canon law had a longer life, because it was the law of the Church and administered in her courts. It was typically Roman in that England did not count for more in the system than a county in English law. She was, in fact, not even a province, but two separate Archiepiscopal sees. The Popes, from time to time, issued their decrees like the Cæsars, and if we are to believe Professor Maitland, these decrees had the force of law over our Church. The only compensating advantage of this alien jurisdiction within the realm, was the presence on the bench of clerical judges learned in Canon law, by which means our common lawyers were kept in touch with Roman ideas.

After Magna Carta, the spirit of nationality becomes more and more pronounced. The barons did, indeed, send an invitation to Louis of France to come over and supplant John, but they were acting under as great provocation as the statesmen who called over William of Orange to deliver them from another *protégé* of Rome. It must be admitted, however, that even though Louis was turned out of the kingdom soon after the tyrant's death, the episode is one which reflects little credit on the barons. The strength of the royalists lay too largely in John's foreign mercenaries and the support of the Papacy. But patriotism there was, if only in germ; nor may we deny the title of patriot to the staunch Archbishop, who incurred suspension rather than take part with the foreigner; to the loyal and victorious Earl of Pembroke; to the men of Kent, who rose behind the invader under Wilkin of the Weald; and the fishermen of the Cinque Ports who rallied to the call of Hubert de Burgh.

For the first time since the Conquest, with the partial exception of Stephen's reign, the occupant of the throne was without either energy or competence. What was worse, he was, for the greater part of his reign, the passive tool of foreigners, and especially of the Pope. He had not forgotten the services rendered to him by the Papacy during his minority, and we find him writing to Grosseteste, in 1245, that he would consent to lose an arm, or even his head, if he ever wavered in fidelity to Rome.

In truth, the country had been brought to a humiliating pass. The policy of Hildebrand had succeeded with a vengeance, succeeded to such a degree as to ensure its own failure, when John stooped to become the vassal of the proudest of Hildebrand's successors and received his crown at the hands of the Pope's legate. If every Holy Father had been animated by the pure ideals of an Innocent III, the subservience might have been less intolerable; but Rome herself was infected by the very canker of simony she professed to heal, and even Becket had found that the arguments best calculated to influence Pope and Cardinals were not always of a spiritual nature. And, indeed, the Papacy was in desperate need of money for its struggle with the Cæsars, and England, under such a feeble tool as Henry III, was a convenient milch cow. Innocent IV went so far as to say, "Is not the King of England our vassal, not to say slave, since we can, at our word, imprison or consign him to ignominy?" Surely it was ignominious enough that such words could be used with impunity of an English king!

But all Englishmen did not possess Henry's subservient temper. The shameless exactions of the Papacy produced a violent reaction, even amongst churchmen, and the King's foreign sympathies aroused strenuous opposition among his subjects. The growing national self-consciousness is vividly displayed in the hatred of

foreigners, which inspires most of the opposition to Henry's rule.

From the greatest baron to the meanest serf, the policy of " England for the English " was a bond of unity, and the successive immigrations of hungry foreigners, French and Italian, jobbing themselves into offices and benefices, and setting the laws at defiance, exasperated and intensified the insular resentment. A few instances, and they are legion, will suffice to show how deeply this feeling had penetrated the nation.

When the brave old justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, no friend of the people in the modern sense, but a sturdy patriot, had incurred the King's and Church's disfavour, the smith who was ordered to put him in chains refused, with the words: " I will die any death before I put iron on the man who freed England from the stranger and saved Dover from France." Such language, in the mouth of a poor and uneducated man, bears eloquent witness to the spirit that was beginning to permeate the country. Our next instance is taken from Oxford, then a dirty, narrow-streeted little town, teeming with poverty and intellectual activity, and like certain foreign universities nowadays, so keenly sensitive to the breezes of political sentiment that the rhyme ran :

" When Oxford draws its knife,
England's soon at strife.".

In 1238, the Pope's legate paid the university a visit, and the students went to pay him their respects. However, the Italian porter, " after the manner of the Romans," denied admission with taunts and raillery, to which the students replied, after the manner of university men, by forcible entry. It so happened that a poor man was standing at the kitchen door begging for alms in God's name, and the legate's brother, who was chief cook, and by way of being a humorist, threw some boiling water in his face. This was too much for the students,

and one of them, who hailed from the Welsh marches, cried "Shame on us to endure anything like this," and skewered the cook with an arrow. The legate was struck with fear, which, as the chronicler charitably reminds us, can overtake even the boldest man, and ran away in his hood to hide in the church, till the approach of night enabled him to get away altogether, on horseback. Meanwhile, the students, fired with the true spirit of an undergraduate rag, were looking for him in every hiding-place but the right one, with shouts of "Where is that simoniacal usurer, that plunderer of revenues and thirster for money, who perverts the King, subverts the kingdom, and enriches foreigners with spoils taken from us?"

Our third instance is the memorable remonstrance sent to the Holy See by the Parliament, or assemblage of magnates, lay and clerical, which met at London in 1247. These two letters, one to the Pope and one to the Cardinals, are signed with the mark of the City of London. In courteous but very firm language, the Parliament sets forth the intolerable burden of the papal exactions, and points out that money is wanted for national purposes. These are twofold, the first military, to guard against the incursions and treachery of enemies, and the second for what we should now call social reform, or provision for the poor.

To write a detailed account of the vicissitudes of Henry's long reign, of the struggle to throw off the yoke of the alien, and the gradual formation of a central body representative to some extent of national feeling, would be foreign to our purpose. The reign is, on the whole, one of dissension and impotence, but none the less, from a patriotic standpoint, it is a period of fruitful and rapid growth. The distinction between Englishman and Norman is now practically obliterated; that between Englishman and foreigner is ever becoming more marked. Moreover, with the weakening of the feudal system, England

stood in little need of the alien power of the Papacy as a counteracting force.

It was, at one time, quite conceivable that the work of the Reformation would have been anticipated, and England have snapped the bonds of Rome three centuries before the appointed time. The first half of the century witnessed a decline in religious fervour. A rationalizing spirit was abroad; the Emperor Frederick, the wonder of Europe, was shrewdly suspected of infidelity; Oriental and Manichean ideas were in the air. The study of Aristotle was revived, and in the last stages of the struggle with the Emperors, the policy of the Popes was marked by the extreme of bitterness and greed. But the Church displayed the power, which was and is her peculiar gift, of finding fresh sources of vitality in the least promising circumstances.

In England, as well as in Europe, she managed not only to retain her hold but to continue her work of elevating the poor, and this in spite of the shameless exactions of the Papacy. The credit of this work must be shared between the two new orders of friars, those of St. Francis and St. Dominic. They came over in the twenties, in the first glow of saintly zeal, and they were not long in getting to work all over the country, especially in the towns, whose spiritual interests had hitherto been insufficiently provided for. Penniless, devoted men, for the most part, reaching the lowest haunts of infamy and disease, they were not unworthy of Bishop Grosseteste's tribute: "They penetrate our whole country with the light of their preaching and learning." And so, when the investiture controversy had lost its meaning, a way was found for the Church to continue her highest task and retrieve, by the poverty of her friars, what the avarice of her pontiffs had so nearly lost.

The case of Grosseteste himself is of extreme interest. To the saintliness and learning of Anselm he added some-

thing of Becket's fiery obstinacy, and we find him coming forward as the champion of high ecclesiastical claims, and the devoted son of the Papacy. But Grosseteste proved himself different from Becket in that he showed himself an Englishman first and a Roman Catholic afterwards; and towards the end of his life we find him among the foremost supporters of a national policy. On one occasion, when the Pope was desirous of taxing the clergy, the Bishop of Winchester tried to impress Grosseteste with the uselessness of opposing the combined wills of King and Pontiff, and was met by the reply, "All the more reason why we should resist, that it may not become a custom." The authenticity of his final grand remonstrance with the Pope has been disputed, but the letter rings true, and we can more easily believe it to be the work of the Bishop than the concoction of some obscure forger. Here the Pope is roundly informed that his power is valid only so far as it tends to edification, and there occurs the ominous word "Antichrist." As he lay dying, the old man was heard to murmur, before the power of speech failed him for ever: "Never will the Church be delivered from this Egyptian bondage except at bloody sword's point."

It was a friend of Grosseteste's who was to bring the idea of a definitely national policy to fruition, and curiously enough, this man was a foreigner by birth. He had surrendered two of his castles as an example to other foreigners, and at the very climax of his career the taunt of his origin was thrown in his teeth by such opponents as the Earl of Gloucester. But Simon, Earl of Leicester, was to prove himself as devoted an Englishman as the Bishop of Lincoln. His adopted countrymen were not slow to recognize his love for them, for after his death he was venerated as a saint, and miracles were performed at the good Earl's tomb in the teeth of royal disfavour. Still more important, the young Prince Edward had

learnt a lesson from his conqueror and victim, and it was upon his shoulders that Simon's mantle fell. The Earl was hinting at a deeper truth than he consciously realized when he exclaimed, in the field of Evesham: "By the arm of St. James, they advance wisely, but they learnt it from me." The policy of our first great patriot King is a direct continuation of Simon de Montfort's.

The Earl's patriotism was not without flaw. A rough, workaday man, playing what was, at the best, a desperate game, he was driven at times to act in a manner unworthy of himself, and annoyed even his supporters by an alliance with the Welsh prince against English royalists on the marches. His own government was harsh and autocratic, and even his famous second Parliament was packed with his supporters. But the work he accomplished was sound and permanent, and though Henry conquered at Evesham, the policy of letting England be managed in the interests of foreigners was killed for ever.

Earl Simon was a man of broader mind than most of his brother barons, and he did not mean to let power slip out of the hands of the King into that of an oligarchy. It was his task to repose the government upon as broad a basis as possible, and in particular, to recognize the claim of the commercial and even industrial classes. His expedient of summoning representatives from the towns is justly recognized as marking the birth of our English Parliament, or at least its coming of age. Speculation may busy itself with the Saxon Witan, or the assemblies of magnates with whom the Norman kings took counsel, but the main facts of the situation may be easily grasped. For the first century and a half after the Conquest, more or less vague powers of consultation and registration were exercised by an ill-defined assembly, the great majority of whose members were territorial, ecclesiastical and official magnates; but it is neither proved, nor probable, that the Crown allowed itself to

be much hampered by them in its actions. In the Charter such an assembly is definitely recognized as consisting of ecclesiastical dignitaries and tenants-in-chief, and as only the greater of these latter were summoned by name, and attendance was a burden, the scheme works out in practice in an even more oligarchical sense than it does on paper.

The struggles between Henry III and his barons were, for the most part, between an unpatriotic monarchy and a native oligarchy. The motives of the barons must not be appraised at too high a value. One potent reason for ousting the foreigner was that many appointments were regarded as the perquisites of the barons themselves, and the Oxford scheme for controlling the Crown was as frankly unimaginative and oligarchic as can well be conceived. But Simon had more than feudalism to back him, and he knew it. London had been steadily growing in importance, and had contributed a powerful contingent to the rebel army at Lewes, even though the Lord Edward had amused himself, after the fashion of Prince Rupert, by riding and cutting down her citizens while the battle was being lost elsewhere. But the expedient of summoning representatives from the other boroughs, whatever its immediate motives, and whether or no it was meant to have been repeated, was an original and brilliant piece of statesmanship, and henceforth we find what we now know as business motives entering more and more into the national policy. Against two opposite evils has England had to contend—the first, the false military or aristocratic pride that scorns peaceful industry; the second, the even more dangerous burgher materialism that would govern states on a tradesman's calculation of profit and loss.

Under Simon's auspices there was a genuine desire to make England commercially independent by fostering the infant industry of cloth-weaving. Something of the sort

had already been attempted by the barons at Oxford, who had passed a sweeping, and wholly impracticable, regulation forbidding the export of wool. After Lewes, however, the initiative was taken by the foreigners themselves, for the Papacy, naturally indignant at the turn things had taken, tried to stop trade with England. Simon was nothing daunted, for he believed that England was quite capable of providing for herself without foreign assistance, and those who wished to please him took to wearing the coarse fabrics, which were all of which English craftsmen were yet capable. This policy provided for a class lower in the scale than the tradesmen, who had formed the original merchant gilds, and, indeed, the time was ripe, for the craft gilds were coming into existence, and in London the struggle had already begun between the trading and industrial classes.

Thus, by the time Simon died, several essential factors of patriotism had been established. Saxon and Norman had blended; feudal anarchy was curbed; the anti-national claims of the Church had grown odious; a trading class was beginning to flourish, and an industrial class struggling into existence; the towns were under control and the germ of a national policy planted; the foundations had been laid of an English law; a national army was coming into being, and a sturdy and defiant pride of race was spreading through all classes.

Nor was this growing patriotism quite inarticulate. We have seen how a native culture had been almost extinguished by the Conquest, and how even the language had suffered eclipse. Nearly all the best work was done in foreign tongues, the language of the court and castle, the language of the Church and universities, were not English. The great body of literature was untouched by patriotism, the loves and adventures of chivalrous heroes, the edifying sermons of the Church and her splendid superstructure of theology were better fitted to reflect the cosmopolitan spirit

of Rome and the anarchic tendencies of feudalism than the consciousness of Motherland. But in several important directions the patriotism, whose growth we have traced, found expression, not in the masterpieces of a vernacular literature, but in the work of men whose chief glory it is to have laid the foundations on which the masters could build.

The first condition of patriotism is the sense of national continuity. It was hopeless to expect Norman and Englishman to amalgamate, unless they could find a common pride in the past, a common heritage of history and tradition. In course of time the Anglicized Normans came to adopt not only the name but the very past of Englishmen. Alfred and Arthur were names more inspiring than those of Rollo or Charlemagne. One of the most important branches of literature, one especially cultivated during this period of transition, was that which directly concerned itself with the country's immediate and remote past. These medieval chroniclers were making history while they wrote it, and fulfilling that most dignified of the historian's functions in strengthening the bond between the generations, and deepening the self-same passions whose course they traced.

The work of the chroniclers was twofold, for there were some who delighted to trace, with painstaking minuteness, facts which had either come under their own observation, or of which there was trustworthy evidence; and others, who were rather romancers than historians, and performed the no less important function of providing a legendary background for present achievement, peopling the land with ghosts of heroes, from whose lives men might learn to sacrifice their own. Now the Saxons were not without pride of race, nor was this pride extinguished by conquest. If we may believe Ordericus Vitalis, the Saxon levies of William Rufus not only proclaimed their loyalty to him as King, but counselled him to search well the

nistories of the English and find if they had ever shown disloyalty. And indeed, they soon succeeded in attaching themselves to their new kings, with as heartfelt a devotion as they had evinced for the line of Cedric. They were in transports of joy when Henry I, with their aid, overcame Robert de Belesme.

It was during the latter half of the twelfth century, when Norman as well as Saxon was beginning to rejoice in the name of Englishman, that the activity of the chroniclers attains its zenith. The Angevin Empire may have been more of a danger than a blessing from a material point of view, but it at least did something towards fostering a healthy pride, and the mere fact that the King of England was, with the possible exception of the Emperor, the most powerful sovereign in Europe, must of itself have contributed to some extent towards effacing the bitterness of conquest. It is now that a William or a Roger ceases to scoff at Godric and Godiva, and is as proud of the vanquished of Senlac as of the victors.

The foremost of all the chroniclers for accuracy, for command of his materials, and for ease of style, is William of Malmesbury, who died before Henry II came to the throne. He is a fervent patriot, though in one odd passage he shows that his patriotism is not an unlimited passion. He is recording how Edgar the Atheling sacrificed his prospects of a career abroad, in order to breathe the air of his native land, which Malmesbury calls a silly desire, and remarks to what an extent men are sometimes deceived by the love of their country. But, as a general rule, he is a patriot of a high order. He feels Norman and English blood in his veins, and he is proud of both. But England is his true mother-country, as we see in his lament over Hastings: "This was a day fatal to England; a melancholy havoc to our dear country through its change of masters." The mere fact that his masterpiece is a history of the Kings of England, and not of the Dukes of

Normandy, shows which way his mind was biassed. He takes a special pride in the success of our arms, and remarks that though the English had been conquered at home they always appeared invincible when they fought abroad. Of the Battle of Tenchebrai, he says that it was no doubt a wise dispensation of God that Normandy should have been subdued to England on the anniversary of William's landing at Hastings.

Malmesbury is perhaps the greatest patriot among the chroniclers. But he was not alone in loving his country, and indeed it is not surprising that we should find patriotism burning brightest among the historians, amid the darkness of feudalism. It is hardly possible to chronicle the fortunes of a noble race, one that included such names as Alfred, Athelstan, and Harold, without feeling a certain joy in its membership, and a wish to connect one's personality with its achievement. Thus does history foster patriotism. Two instances from among the contemporaries of Malmesbury will suffice. One of the longest and most diffuse of historians, but seldom tedious, is Ordericus Vitalis. He was the son of a French priest, but he was born in England and lived there, till at the age of nine the poor little fellow was packed off to a monastery in Normandy of whose very language he was quite ignorant. But though he remained a monk of St. Evroult, and though he speaks of Normandy as his own country, he never lost his affection for the land of his birth, and it suffuses his book from end to end. Though he regards Harold as a perjured usurper, he cannot help admiring the "indomitable courage of the English, many of them devoted to the cause of Harold, and all to that of their country," and though he admires Duke William, he cannot but blame his cruelty to the English, while again and again the excesses of the Normans fall under his ban. The patriotism of Ordericus is tinged with a certain wistful pity that betrays his monkish sympathies, and while

Malmesbury is proud of his countrymen, Ordericus is more often sorry for them.

Less entitled to distinction than either Malmesbury or Ordericus is the somewhat pretentious Henry of Huntingdon, who brings his story up to the reign of Henry II. He was in the habit of interspersing his narrative with poems, and one of these, which celebrates Henry's accession, after the years during which, according to the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, Christ and his saints had slept, is worth quoting from, as showing the patriotism that was beginning to fix its hopes upon the strong rule of the Angevins:

> "Thy England calls thee, Henry, to her throne,
> Now fallen from her once imperial state,
> Exhausted, helpless, ruined, desolate."

And the young King is supposed to address her in these words:

> "Thine own red cross, proud England, leads me on,
> To fields where glory, freedom, shall be won,
> Fit emblem ours, to consecrate the fight,
> Of suffering innocence with lawless might.
> I come to cause the tyrant's rule to cease,
> And o'er the gasping land spread smiling peace,
> Land of my sires! thy blest deliverer be,
> And, Christ me aiding, give thee liberty,
> Or lifeless on thy bloodstained soil to lie,
> For thee to conquer, or for thee to die."*

So much for the chroniclers of real fact, the historians proper. We now pass on to those other architects of patriotism, those who invested our history with its background of legend, who gave to England, in King Arthur, what Theseus was to Athens and Æneas to Rome. Here we come into contact with the strain in our race which is neither Saxon nor Norman, but precedes both. We need not condescend to the extravagance of a school of modern critics, who have made a fetish of what they call the Celtic spirit, by the easy method of calling all the lighter imaginative touches in our literature Celtic and the more

* T. Forester's Translation.

solid work Saxon, so that the poor Saxon is indeed in a hopeless case, for no sooner does he pass his prescribed bounds of stolidity than, *ipso facto,* he becomes a Celt. But we may grant that the spirit of the old Celtic literature was essentially different from that of either Saxon or Norman, and that it could and did supplement both, in providing a basis for the glory to come. Its prevailing note may be characterized as dreaminess, in the most literal sense, for in the old Welsh stories we find ourselves in just the same sort of world as we sometimes dimly remember on awakening in the morning.

These heroes and adventurers do not strike one as being real men, for they behave in the same unconditioned and inconsequential manner as the queer folk with whom we people our nightly stage; one of them runs over long grass without bending it; another may be buried deep under the earth and yet hear an ant rising fifty miles off; another could suck up a sea on which were three hundred ships, for he was broad-chested. Their adventures are of the same rambling and shadowy description; we follow them with the same interest with which we watch the changing forms of clouds or the clefts and gorges between glowing coals.

It was in such a world as this that the traditional story of our race was brought to birth, and from which gradually emerges the colossal figure of Arthur. We need not concern ourselves with the steps of this development, nor with the question of whether there was, or was not, a real Arthur—some heroic chief of the Britons who smote the Saxons upon Badon Down, and died fighting at Camlan. The Arthur who emerges from these stories—and he only appears to have come into prominence at a comparatively late period—is not the patriot hero, hewing back the enemies of his race, so much as a dream king, a shadow about whom all the other shadows revolve.

It was necessary for these legends to come into the

hands of another race, in order that some measure of strength and unity might be imparted to them. It is where Welshman and Norman, dreamer and man of action, came into contact, that a chronicler resided capable of making these fairy tales serve a patriotic purpose. Geoffrey of Monmouth was his name, and he was a contemporary of Malmesbury's, being finally raised to the Bishopric of St. Asaph. In his chronicle we find the crude material upon which the masters of our literature were glad to work. Here we meet with Locrine and Gorboduc, Leir and Cymbeline, Kay and Bedivere.

Geoffrey professed to have derived these tales from a Welsh book, and he would have his readers accept them for fact; but the book in question has not been discovered; and, though in the Welsh histories that we possess we find the origin of much that he wrote, the spirit and a great deal of the matter of his chronicle seem to be his own, and it is just what we should expect from a man of Norman instincts working upon Celtic material. The dream element is still there, and in some places, notably in Merlin's prophecies, it becomes grotesque and incoherent; but with a few lapses, the narrative marches with a steady tread, and it is informed with a consistent and often extravagant patriotism. It fixed once and for all the main outlines of the British legend, and, though the story is not, logically speaking, to the fame of either the Saxons, against whom Arthur had fought, or those who had, in their turn, conquered the Saxons, it was enough that they were British for both to appropriate and glory in them.

Geoffrey takes us back to the very origin of our race, which is descended, like Rome, from a Trojan wanderer. The real origin of this hero seems to have been a pun on the name Britain, which of course must have been founded by some one of the name of Brutus, for the methods of scientific criticism were not quite unknown even in the

Middle Ages. The island was originally called Albion, and was inhabited by a few giants, and the oracle of Diana informs Brutus that he shall found a second Troy there: "Of thy line shall kings be born, and by them the whole earth shall be subdued." So Brutus comes, bringing with him his Trojan, or "British" followers. Corineus, his "fidus Achates," finds it a capital diversion to encounter the giants, and pitches Gogmagog, the biggest of them, bodily over a cliff. And so Brutus, having made short work of the giants, assumes the government of the island and builds his new Troy—which has since got the name of London—at the mouth of the Thames.

Then follow the records of his successors; how Leir was dishonoured by his daughters; how "Sabrina fair" was thrown into the Severn; and how Brennius, an Englishman, besieged and conquered Rome, one of the defeated consuls, by the way, being Lars Porsena. Julius Cæsar is rather more difficult to deal with, and he is allowed to get the better of Cassibellaunus in the long run. But he has previously sustained two frightful defeats, and when at last he does conquer, it is only by the assistance of a rebel British duke, who refuses to allow Cæsar to do more than put Cassibellaunus under tribute. The whole episode is entirely to the credit of the Trojan Britons. The fact of the Roman occupation was one unsurmountable even by Geoffrey, though he smooths it over considerably by British victories, and makes the Emperor Constantine a grandson of Old King Cole. The fact of the Saxons having conquered Britain was also one that had to be admitted.

But these humiliations are more than counterbalanced by the dazzling personality of Arthur. It may be said, without exaggeration, that every age has its own Arthur. Here we have neither the old shadowy figure-head, nor Malory's flower of perfect knighthood, still less a "blame-

less king," modelled on a prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Geoffrey's Arthur is just such a hero as William the Conqueror or Roger Guiscard, a Norman adventurer on a grand scale, only with England and not Normandy for his native land. Arthur is not content with vanquishing the Saxons, but he must needs create an empire. He first conquers the Scots, who are referred to with an antipathy that was to last to the days of Dr. Johnson, as "that miserable race," reminding us of Malmesbury's courteous reference to the Scot's "fellowship with vermin." He next subdues Ireland, and going further afield, conquers Norway, Gottland, and the Orkneys. He then anticipates and surpasses the glories of Henry V, by conquering France and holding his Court at Paris; Normandy, by the way, being assigned as a province to Sir Bedivere. But Arthur's crowning exploit is the overthrow of Rome, though he is recalled by the treachery of Mordred before he can actually plant his banners on the Capitol.

If we are to judge Geoffrey of Monmouth upon his claim to be narrating things that happened, we must dismiss him as being either extremely credulous, or an unmitigated liar. The feats attributed to Arthur were too much even for Geoffrey's contemporaries, and one of them remarks dryly that he had made the British King's little finger thicker than the loins of Alexander the Great. But if we regard him in the light of a creative artist, consciously transforming legendary material into a prose epic, instinct with profound symbolism, we can hardly over-estimate the value of what he accomplished. We have seen how the first instinct of the Normans had been to despise everything English, and on the English side the tendency had been overmuch towards the helpless pathos of the Anglo-Saxon Chroniclers' "Christ and his saints slept." Neither contempt nor helplessness induces to patriotism, and these legendary glories, which

were the common property of baron and serf, and which survive in place names all over Britain, were the best possible means of touching the medieval imagination and effecting what the philosophic cant of our own day would call a transvaluation of values. The Norman would look back, not upon Rollo, but upon Arthur, whose career would exactly realize what he must have conceived as his ideal man of action. The Saxon would no longer think of himself as the member of a crushed race, but, illogically enough, as the countryman of the great king, and the descendant of Trojan Brutus, one of a people who

> "In everything are sprung,
> From earth's first blood, have titles manifold."

The Poitevin Cœur de Lion had scoffed at the name of Englishman, but the time would come when the victor of Cressy would deliberately order his Court at Windsor in imitation of the Table Round. Geoffrey's book won an immediate popularity among all classes. Even Henry II was not behind-hand in taking advantage of this new method of appealing to the pride of his subjects, and ordered investigations to be made at Glastonbury in order to discover Arthur's body, which, we need hardly say, were successful.

The subsequent history of the Arthurian legend is chequered and manifold. Geoffrey's conception of a patriotic hero was too novel to obtain universal favour, and as the story was soon translated into French, it became one of the stock tales of medieval romance, and the fame of the King is overshadowed by that of individual knights, Launcelot and Tristram and Gawain. Of such a nature was the romance of which Francesca speaks, and indeed, in these tales Arthur had well-nigh ceased to have any connection with Britain, and had become a purely romantic figure, to while away the long bookless tedium of winter nights. The Church, too, with the spirit of the crusades glowing in her bosom, grafted upon the original

legend the High History of the Holy Grail, which has equally little connection with patriotism. And in the Celtic tradition the old dream king lives on, and is even brought into direct relationship with Oberon.

But the English tradition was not allowed to die. Shortly after the date of Geoffrey's chronicle, we hear of what is perhaps the most touching of all the Arthurian legends, to the effect that the great king might not, after all, be dead, but waiting at Avalon for the hour of England's need. Had not Merlin prophesied that his death should be doubtful? And just after the fall of Château-Gaillard had finally separated England from Normandy, appeared the "Brut" of Layamon, translating the "matter of Britain" into the English tongue. The legend had been firmly enough established to survive, in its patriotic form, all the embroidery of dream and romance, and we find it being continually amplified down to the end of the Middle Ages. We need not look with too severe an eye upon those, who like honest old Layamon, set down these dreams as sober fact. To the medieval mind, the border line between symbol and fact was not always distinct, and it is remarkable how these traditions appealed to the greatest of English symbolists in a later age, to him who wrote as a kind of refrain to his most inspired vision:

> "All things begin and end in Albion's ancient, Druid, rocky shore."

Arthur and the line of Brutus were not the only heroes whose romances were kept green by the children of the Conquest. The Saxon worthies are not allowed to fall into oblivion. The proverbs of Alfred are preserved or invented, and Athelstan occurs in one of the feudal romances, whose theme is distinctly patriotic, in spite of the rather tedious love-story with which it is interwoven. This is called "Guy of Warwick" and culminates in a duel between the hero and a gigantic Dane called

Colbrand. Guy declares that he fights for God in Trinity and the freedom of England, for by the conditions of the fight, if the Dane wins, the Danes are to rule the land. We need hardly say that after a keen struggle, Guy is victorious, and the Danes, "with sorrow and care," get them out of the land. The Church also played her part in keeping bright the fame of Saxon England. The Norman Conquest was powerless to decanonize the saints, and some of these were kings too. Readers of Carlyle will know the extraordinary veneration excited by the remains of the blessed St. Edmund. Edward the Confessor, weak and incompetent though he had been during his life, was specially beloved after his death, and we frequently hear of his mild laws being appealed to against the rule of the Normans. In the "Golden Legend" we have a pathetic account of the traditions that must have gathered, in an iron age, about the good king's reign. "O good Lord! what joy and gladness was then in England. For when the old felicity of this land was almost despaired, then it was kindled again by the coming of the blessed King Edward. Then had the commons rest and peace, and the lords and gentlemen rest and honour, and then holy Church received all her liberties again. Then was the sun lifted up, and the moon shined in his order, that is to say, priests shined in wisdom and in holiness, the monasteries flourished in devotion by holy religion. The clerks gave light and prospered in their offices to the pleasure of God. The common people were content and were joyful in their degree, and in the King's days there was no venom that might then corrupt the earth with pestilence, and in the sea none outrageous tempests, and the land plenteous of all manner of fruits; and in the clergy nothing inordinate; and among the common people there was no grudging." This vision of rest and plenty bears witness, like the dreams of the early Christians, to the desolation out of which it must have sprung.

But the time of utter darkness was passing. Gradually, painfully, but all the more surely for that, England was beginning to feel her soul, and though her self-consciousness was for long to be imperfect and hindered, though it seemed at one time as if she were to reel back into darkness and lose her being, her progress was never really delayed, even though she had to be purged seven times in the fire.

We cannot do better than conclude this chapter by a glance at our first great naval triumph off Dover, under the staunch Hubert de Burgh. "If this folk lands," he cried to those around him, "England is lost; so let us meet them boldly, for God is with us and they are excommunicated." His men protested that they were only poor fishermen, and not sea-warriors or pirates; whereupon their leader, nothing daunted, stiffened their resolution by swearing that they might hang him if he surrendered the key of England. The honest fellows were moved to tears, one exclaimed that if Monk Eustace landed all would be laid waste; and then another cried, "Who is ready to die for England?" Whereupon a third said, "Here am I." And so the little fleet put forth, hopelessly inferior in numbers, beating up towards Calais to get the weather gage, and then, while the enemy at once derided and misunderstood the manœuvre, turning north-eastward and swooping upon the rear of the French fleet, grappling and boarding in the true spirit of Nelson, overwhelming them with showers of arrows and quicklime, and in the end all but annihilating the proud armada, which had put forth under the dreaded Monk Eustace, to reduce London and bring Arthur's land under the heel of a Louis.

## CHAPTER II

### THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

THE student of patriotism must not expect to find an emotion easily gauged and always the same, something of which he can say definitely that a nation has or has it not at any given time. If this were the case, as one might gather from the language of more than one writer, his task would be devoid alike of difficulty and interest. He is treating of a love which is fitful and crude in its beginnings, and which, only after many vicissitudes, becomes deep and general. Perfect and unalloyed he will never find it, for the consummation of love is not within the power of any creature.

Hence it comes that the growth of patriotism never proceeds with a smooth, uninterrupted gait, but like the year, fitfully. On some morning, early in April, it might seem as if the spring had come to fruition, when all the ground is argus-eyed with the celandine and starflower, and the gardens flushing with almond blossom and wild currant, and yet a few days afterwards all the blossoms are hidden and the bushes weighed down beneath the returning snow. To the case of patriotism we have a close parallel in the formation of the human character. It is common knowledge to those who are skilled in the training, whether of infants or grown men, that this is the order of spiritual progression. The violent fits of excitement, the illuminations and conversions, are inevitably succeeded by a proportionate reaction, and even

the most exalted of initiates are unanimous in reporting seasons of "dryness" or lassitude. This is not only a necessary, but wholly beneficent condition of progress. These temporary harmonies are grounded upon a basis of imperfection. Some element of pride, some thought of reward, enters, however subtly, into the raptures of the novice. He must return awhile to the depths before he can attain to the summit.

The application of this truth to the spiritual history of nations should be obvious. Out of the darkness of the feudal night it would be madness to expect a love of England, born of a few struggling generations, to pervade the whole people in perfect strength and wisdom. But we may say with truth of the period roughly marked by the reigns of the first three Edwards, that it was graced by a patriotism which had previously existed only in germ, and which bore fruit as splendid as Cressy and as substantial as parliamentary government. Victories were gained which, with but one exception, were unrivalled until the days of the Armada, liberties achieved which had to be recovered from the Stuarts.

Then follows the reaction. These triumphs had been premature, these liberties achieved by a people incapable of using them; not yet had the unity of England become complete and spiritual. The old powers of selfishness and disorder burst forth with uncurbed violence. Civil war desolated the land, shame and defeat tarnished our standards, tyranny flourished unchecked, it seemed once again as if Christ and His saints slept. This roughly describes the close of the Middle Ages in England.

In Edward I the nation, for the first time since the Conquest, had found a patriot king. Even his long, fair hair bewrayed the Englishman. He is rightly to be regarded not as the successor of his father, but of Simon de Montfort, for it is in the Earl's spirit that he confronts his people and the Earl's policy of which his own is a

continuation. The nation was ripe for such a leader, for during the long reign of his father, its sympathies had been disregarded and its budding patriotism set at naught by the occupant of the throne. Its natural loyalty to its sovereign was at variance with its loyalty to itself, and it was many times easier to follow an English king than to rally round the most admirable of rebels.

So great was the work accomplished by " our English Justinian," that Sir Matthew Hale thought that more had been done to settle the justice of the kingdom in the first thirteen years of his reign, than in all the three and a half centuries that succeeded it. Every department of national policy was taken in a firm and skilful hand. The power of the greater feudatories, already shaken at Evesham, was now decisively curbed, and a stop was put to the feudal reaction which had set in at Runnymede. The Charter remained, but now as a national and not as a feudal document. Limits were set to the encroachments of Rome. The Church no longer could command the thunders of an Innocent or of a Hildebrand. Her long struggle with the Cæsars had left her victorious indeed, but crippled politically and morally. Even the friars had lost their first zeal, and Archbishop Winchelsey, most of whose political ventures are concerned with money, was himself a disciple of Francis, the bridegroom of poverty. Edward was able to reply to the papal pretensions by outlawing the whole of the clergy, and such was the spirit engendered by the long course of papal exactions, that when Flanders was put under an interdict, the English priests who had been brought over continued their ministrations as if nothing had happened. Commerce was diverted into fixed channels, the rights of aliens defined as against municipal privileges, the Jews expelled, the militia reorganized, and provision made for an effective police system.

All this may be described as a development, under

changed conditions and with a larger background of experience, of the legislative activity of Henry II. But along with the growth of the executive, goes that of a controlling power which was only vaguely known to the first of the Plantagenets. The long domestic struggles of the last reign had borne fruit in the principle laid down by Edward I in the memorable phrase, "What touches all should be approved by all." The nation was beginning to claim a voice in its own government, and even such a popular monarch as Edward was unable to force his will upon his subjects. Once, indeed, with the childlike impulsiveness so characteristic of the Middle Ages, he burst into tears before his Parliament, and acknowledged himself to be in the wrong. But in speaking of the nation's will, we must not be misled by words, for the Parliaments of the thirteenth century were no more representative than the caucus-driven majorities of the twentieth. The great mass of agricultural labourers or serfs were without a voice, and even the towns sent representatives mainly drawn from the merchant, as distinguished from the growing industrial class. The elections were, at best, in the hands of a very few, and at worst, not elections at all, but nominations.

Parliamentary service was regarded as a burden, both by members and constituencies, and even Parliament itself was chary of assuming responsibility. If we are to accept the more sentimental doctrines of modern democracy, the claim of this or any other body that ever existed outside a mass meeting, to be representative of the people's will, would have to be dismissed as a farce. But if we adopt a rational view, and look upon Parliaments as upon a Roi Soleil or a Venetian oligarchy, in the light of a rough means of governing a nation in the way best suited to its genius, we shall find much to admire in the Constitution of the early Edwards. It had come into being as the result, not of a theory, but of a number of practical expedients

for practical ends. When a class of the community became powerful, and knew its own mind, a place was found for it within the pale of the Constitution. The feudal magnates, the lesser barons, the traders, the clergy, were able to express their sentiments clearly, and with the authority that comes from the ownership of the purse-strings. Thus the reign of Edward I marks the coming of age of the English Constitution, and we may endorse the words of Blackstone: "It is from this period, from the exact *observation* of Magna Carta rather than from its *making* or *renewal*, in the days of his grandfather and father, that the liberty of Englishmen began again to rear its head; though the weight of military tenures hung heavy upon it for many ages after."

But this is not the place to follow the constitutional history of the three Edwards. It is one of the best-explored fields in history. Nor need we record the rapid and continuous progress of commerce and industry, except to remark that it is during this period that the attitude of the Crown towards commerce becomes at times almost anti-national. The privileges granted to aliens were bitterly resented by the towns, and Edward III's policy had an adverse effect upon England's commerce and thus, indirectly, upon her sea power, the weakness of which had become a crying scandal at the end of his reign.

But we must remember that his foreign policy aimed at a triple alliance of England, the Low Countries and South-West France, and that this premature imperialism, like that of Henry II, tended to make him oblivious to the interests of his proper motherland. The hankering after France was by no means an extinct passion in the breasts of English kings, and there is reason to believe that Edward himself would not have been averse to change the seat of his power from London to Paris. Two other reasons might be alleged for favouring the alien, the one that it suited the interest of the Crown to grant privileges

to those who were willing to pay for them, the other that it suited the interest of the country magnates to sell their wool in the dearest market, and these magnates still formed the most influential class in the kingdom. Much may be forgiven to Edward III on account of the stimulus that his policy gave to English weaving, for within half a century of his death, English cloth was competing successfully with that of Flanders, and England had begun to provide a market for her own raw produce.

Under the first and third Edwards, our foreign policy had already begun to take definite form, and to be directed towards national ends which are still held in view by modern statesmen. Their British policy, indeed, is dead, because it is consummated, but their European policy has outlasted six centuries. It is summed up in the fact that the key of our position in Europe is the Low Countries. It is extraordinary to what an extent this principle has guided our diplomacy throughout the ages, and the majority of our important wars have resulted more or less directly from it. These certainly include the Hundred Years' War, the smaller wars of Henry VIII and Mary, the Dutch campaigns of Elizabeth, the Dutch wars of Cromwell and Charles II, the whole of the long struggle with Louis XIV, the war of the Austrian succession, and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which start on the Scheldt and end at Waterloo. There are some who have not stopped short of predicting, that another and even sterner contest awaits us, if we are to secure the independence of these countries—and our own.

Here we find the origin of the long rivalry between England and France, which some people have thought to be permanent and incurable. But it is not against France, as France, that our face has been set, but against the power that has threatened to dominate the Low Countries. Now that this state of things has passed away, it has been found possible for the two countries to join

hands in the cordial pursuit of a common policy. But up to a very recent time, the Netherlands had little to fear from an eastern neighbour, unless this term is to be applied to Charles V. Hence our policy has generally been to work with Germany against France, a situation which has now been reversed. As early as the reign of John we find this to be the case, and it was an Anglo-German army that was overthrown at Bouvines. Again, we find Edward III acting at the beginning of the Hundred Years' War as vicar-general of the empire, and leading in vain a large and heterogeneous army to force the French defences of the Flemish border. This, too, is the reason for which Edward III put forward, very unwillingly, his preposterous claim to the throne of France. The Flemish were admittedly vassals of the French King, and if they could acknowledge Edward as the rightful holder of this title, they need have no conscientious scruple about breaking their allegiance to Philip.

The bond between England and Flanders was at this time commercial, and we can understand how rapidly feudalism was breaking down from the fact that the main objects of the French war were such as would be likely to appeal to the burgher class. Even from Saxon times, England had been a wool-growing country, and since Flanders was able to work up the wool into different kinds of cloth, she provided the chief market for our exports. The trade was naturally an object of solicitude to the Edwards, and Edward I never came so near to a serious quarrel with his people as when he seized the merchants' wool. During the fourteenth century, a gradual change was taking place, and Englishmen were learning the weaver's as well as the shepherd's craft.

Another feature of our foreign policy must not be overlooked. The efforts of Edward I to unite the whole island would, if successful, have removed what was to prove a thorn in England's side for centuries. This was

the alliance between France and Scotland, which was to be finally severed by the knife of Butcher Cumberland. We have seen how ancient was the aversion that Englishmen and Scotsmen entertained for each other, and this becomes even more bitter as memories of tyranny on one side and humiliation on the other begin to accumulate. It was one of the chief difficulties of Edward I that he had to be perpetually facing northward and southward, whereas it was all that he could do to find the wherewithal even for one war at a time. When Scotland had broken free, all the influence of France, and of the Popes who were the tools of France, was thrown into the scale to prevent her slipping back into subjection. It is obvious that the more occupied we were with the northern problem, the less free should we be to deal with that of Flanders or Guienne.

Up to the fifth decade of the fourteenth century, England's policy did not appear to have been brilliantly successful. We had subdued Wales and the town of Berwick-on-Tweed, but we had been ignominiously driven out of Scotland, whilst our operations against France had been of a desultory and unsuccessful nature. All this may be regarded as a period of preparation and hardening for the middle of the century, when we were to register such triumphs, that Englishmen had no longer solely to fall back upon the mystical exploits of Arthur, and the equivocal glories of the Angevin Empire. Victories against overwhelming odds, a national hero second to none in Europe, a military prestige so great that no hostile force dared to challenge it in the field, were laurels that were to crown England's brow before peace was concluded at Bretigny. She was to take her place, once and for all, in the forefront of European nations, proudly conscious of her own greatness, and knowing full well that henceforth no stigma could attach to the name of Englishman.

The mighty engine which was to batter down the pride of France had taken centuries to forge. The significance of Cressy lies chiefly in its being a victory of a national and comparatively democratic force over the feudal military aristocracy. Owing to the weakness of the central government, the French nobles had attained a power undreamed of in England, and the symbol and sanction of this power was the array of steel-cased knights who rallied to the standard of a Du Guesclin or an Alençon. An intolerant contempt for the common soldier was of the essence of the French system. "Kill me these scoundrels," Alençon had cried, when his own Genoese cross-bowmen were repulsed at Cressy, and Du Guesclin had scorned to be associated with the foot-soldiers. Even when the English tactics had proved triumphantly successful, the French were unable to adopt them, and actually discouraged their new-raised archery because it might compete with the high-born chivalry.

It was the strength of feudalism to have created a military caste, superior in prowess and equipment to any non-feudal force that could be pitted against it. But if it were possible to raise armies from the poorer class, capable of beating the feudal chivalry in open fight, it was obvious that the old levy and the system on which it was based had become an anachronism. The English way of fighting was the result of many experiments. The practice of dismounting the knights was a legacy of Harold, and the English archers had proved their worth at the Battle of the Standard. All three races, Norman, Saxon, and Celt, contributed their quota to the final success. Wales provided something of more material value than the Arthur legends. She furnished the nimble infantry, who got in with their long knives amongst the struggling, arrow-stung knights at Cressy, thereby, if we may believe Froissart, arousing the chivalrous displeasure of Edward III. But Wales was responsible for an even more effective

innovation, for out of her came the weapon which was to transform medieval warfare, the deadly long-bow. This became the national English weapon, and Edward I was quick to perceive its advantages, when used in proper co-operation with other arms—for Bannockburn was to afford a grim lesson of how easy it was for cavalry to ride down unsupported archers. The mistake was not to be repeated, and the weapon which had triumphed at Falkirk confirmed its reputation, this time in proper co-operation with infantry, at Halidon Hill.

The bow has rightly become symbolic of all that is best and most distinctive in the spirit of medieval England. It was, above all things, a democratic weapon, and its success was admittedly bound up with the power of the commons, as distinct from that of a feudal oligarchy. This is admirably explained by Sir John Fortescue, rich in the experience both of national and civil war, who writes during the reign of Edward IV. Some men, he tells us, want to draw the teeth of the commons, as they do in France, by depriving them of their bows. "But this folk consider little of the good of the realm of England, whereof the might standeth most upon archers, which be no rich men. And if they were made poorer than they be, they should not have wherewith to buy them bows, arrows, jacks, or any other weapon of defence, whereby they might be able to resist our enemies when they come upon us; which they may do on every side, considering that we be an island—and, as it is said before, we may not soon have succour of any other realm. Whereof we shall be a prey to all our enemies, but if we be mighty of ourself, which might standeth most upon our poor archers—and therefore they need not only to have such ablements as now spoken of, but also they need to be much exercised in shooting, which may not be done without right great expenses, as every man expert therein knoweth right well. Wherefore the making poor of the commons,

which is the making poor of our archers, shall be the destruction of the greatest might in the realm."

In fact, archery held the same position in rural England as is held nowadays by cricket and football, and might be held by rifle-shooting. The honest yeomen would make their boys into good shots by a careful gradation in the size of their bows, and it was distinctive of English archery that they were taught to use their bodies for the draw, and not their arms, as in other countries. So great was the average range attained that we find an ordinance of Henry VIII actually forbidding practice at less distance than a furlong.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, England had come to possess in her archers the most formidable body of men in Europe. Time and again they showed themselves, when properly supported, more than a match for the best feudal cavalry that could be brought against them. Their versatility was no less remarkable than their shooting, for on one occasion, when the enemy were so heavily armed that the arrows could not penetrate, they rushed upon them and plied their unwieldy opponents with their own axes. At Poictiers they showed themselves masters of the art of ambuscade, at Agincourt they found a new way of stopping cavalry by an abattis of sharp stakes, and then were as handy at close quarters with their bills and hammers as they had been with their bows. It was no wonder that with such material at his disposal, Edward III should have discovered the advantage of employing a national army. His experiments in Flanders, at the head of a cosmopolitan force, were anything but encouraging. The feudal levy and an army of foreign mercenaries had both been tried and found wanting. A national militia, though an indispensable recruiting basis, was not capable of being used for campaigns abroad. So the King was driven, by a process of exhaustion, to rely upon an army at once paid and

national, just such a regular army as we possess nowadays. From the Black Prince down to the meanest soldier, every man had his fixed scale of pay. Thus was trained a class of professional English soldiers whose mercenary services came to be in demand all over the Continent and who, under Sir John Hawkwood, made the name of Englishman almost as formidable in Italy as it was in France—a proof, by the way, of how woefully imperfect English patriotism still was.

The middle of the fourteenth century witnessed not only Cressy and Poictiers, but the sea victories of Sluys and Winchelsea. The career of the army is parallel to that of the navy, and indeed the two services were as yet but faintly differentiated, for we find the same leaders, and the same weapons, playing their part indifferently on sea and land. A feudal levy was supplied by the Cinque Ports, but like all products of feudalism, it easily got out of hand, and was not above attacking other English shipping. How easily incidents like this could take place will be understood by any one who has witnessed a stand-up fight between the members of the Norfolk and Cornish fishing fleets. In the Middle Ages, fights of this kind used to happen on a big scale, the greatest of all being one between the English and Norman fisherfolk in which our men were signally victorious, and on account of which the French King presented an indignant claim for compensation to Edward I. Indeed, it was natural that marine warfare of a private or local nature should survive longer than on land, owing to the difficulty of policing the high seas. It was the wish of Chaucer's merchant that this should be done between Middleburgh and Orwell, and certainly from the time of Edward III some effort was made to collect and convoy fleets of merchantmen at stated times. Tonnage and poundage was given to the King " pur le sauf garde et custodie del mer." But for a long time this protection was far from being effective.

There was, beside the feudal force, a kind of naval militia, for on critical occasions the King would be allowed to impress ships and make the ports pay their expenses. Out of these, and blending with them in various proportions, emerges a royal navy, which takes permanent shape in the time of John, though his claim to the sovereignty of the seas, on which Selden was to lay stress four centuries later, is probably apocryphal. The result of this confused and imperfect system was that by the middle of the fourteenth century the English navy had defeated its two most formidable rivals and gained temporary command of the sea.

But the navy occupied a place second to the army in the popular imagination, and Edward himself did not take the requisite steps for its maintenance. Round English archery, and not seamanship, the bravest legends gather. It is in Piers Plowman that we first hear of Robin Hood, and it is evident that rhymes about him must have been current among the poorer classes during the reign of Edward III. The emergence of this new group of legends marks as important a development in our history as the Arthurian cycle in the twelfth century. Arthur and Brutus were aristocrats, and as they take shape in the pages of Geoffrey, were Normans, but Robin is cast in a different mould. He is an English hero, the man of the people, champion of archers, and above all, by the adoption of a French word to express an untranslatable and peculiarly English attribute, he is " jolly Robin," and it is not strange that conjecture has connected him with the Saxon resistance to the Conquest, and even with Simon de Montfort. There is something peculiarly Saxon about Robin's lusty individualism; he is always represented as being " agin the Government," a quality which he shares with the three northern outlaws, Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough and William of Cloudesley, good yeomen all, who on one occasion held up the city of Carlisle, and, as

the ballad approvingly records, slew three hundred men and more :

" First the Justice and the Sheriff,
And the Mayor of Carlisle town,
Of all the constables and catchpolls
Alive were scarce left one.

" The bailiffs and the beadles both,
And the sergeants of the law,
And forty fosters of the fee
These outlaws had yslaw ;

" And broke his [the King's] parks and slain his deer
Of all they chose the best ;
Such perilous outlaws as they were
Walked not by east or west."

A tenderness for the enemies of society, provided they can be represented as jolly fellows, has always been a trait of English character. Even Shakespeare's Barnardine, who is too lazy to get up and be hanged, awakens a chord of sympathy in most of our breasts, and despite the laudable efforts of realists like Fielding and Dickens to dissipate the glamour of misdoing, the devotees of such heroes as Dick Turpin, Claude Duval, Jack Sheppard, Captain Kidd, and the smugglers have been numbered by the thousand. Only a short time ago there was running, and may be running still, a music-hall catch which goes somewhat as follows :

" Down our court lives ole Billy Sikes,
'E always does whatever 'e likes,
A copper once followed 'im down our court,
And now the police force is one copper short ! "

It would not be just to ascribe this trait to a sympathy with crime for crime's sake, on the part of the most law-abiding people in the world. It is rather the overflowing love of individual freedom which, for good or evil, distinguishes us from most Continental peoples. It is for this reason that Englishmen have, up to a quite recent date, been wont to taunt the French with being slaves,

and Fortescue actually goes so far as to deduce their inferiority to Englishmen, from the fact that they had not pluck enough to indulge in highway robbery! The sheriffs, judges, turnkeys, and "coppers" of different ages are not so much the defenders of society, as the embodiments of officialdom, and the clown who prods the policeman with a red-hot poker, and Punch, that arch-anarch, who triumphs uproariously over all matrimonial, social, and even professional conventions, and is only vanquished by the clown, the humorist of the drama, minister to a deep-seated and not wholly reprehensible craving of the English soul.

Robin Hood and three northern outlaws represent this defiance of law in its noblest aspect, for though they are outlaws, poachers, and robbers, they are in no sense what we should now call criminals. On the contrary, they attain as high and exquisite a standard of character as Sir Launcelot himself, in that wonderful lament of Sir Ector de Maris:

"A good manner then had Robin;
In land where that he were,
Every day he would dine
Three masses would he hear.

"The one in worship of the Father,
The other of the Holy Ghost,
The third was of our dear Lady,
Whom he loved aldermost.

"Robin loved our dear Lady;
For doubt of deadly sin
Would he no company do harm
That woman was therein."

No chivalrous knight could display greater courtesy than Robin, and he was beloved of all poor folk, and even the lesser knights, the "minores barones," came within the scope of his beneficence, for he helped Sir Richard of the Lea to pay off a debt to a greedy abbot, who would have robbed him of all that he had, and he refused to

accept repayment. The three northern yeomen were just as kind-hearted, and it was an ungrateful old woman whom he had sheltered and befriended, that betrayed William of Cloudesley to the citizens of Carlisle. Every trace of inferiority, of the melancholy resignation which had marked the attitude of the Saxon in relation to his masters, has now disappeared. The poor yeoman, with a long-bow in his hands and the good greenwood for his fortress, feels himself quite a match for sheriffs and abbots and all their kind. Again and again he sings the awakening of the spring in the forest, and the spirit of May runs riot in his blood all the year round. His land has become "merry England," and it is good to be alive in it. The lyric ecstasy begins to awaken, and as early as the middle of the thirteenth century we have the perfect little "cuckoo song," so full of spontaneous happiness:

"Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu;
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth,
Murie sing cuccu!"

As we might expect, though Robin and William of Cloudesley set their faces, and draw their bows, against the feudal magnates, they are not disloyal to the King, except to the extent of shooting his fat deer. Around the throne, all Englishmen could now unite, and William and his two friends rise to high favour at Court, and so for a time does Robin, until he gets tired of high life, and returns to more congenial pursuits in the greenwood.

"Christ have mercy on his soul
That died upon the Rood!
For he was a good outlaw,
And did poor men much good."

Most of the Robin ballads that we know are of the fifteenth century, but it is evident that the legend dates at least from the first half of the fourteenth, and it is not likely that the tales of the common folk would have

crystallized themselves into literature so quickly as the feudal romances. Of the rhymes of Ranulf of Chester, which are bracketed with them in Piers Plowman, not one remains to us. But Robin's spirit was abroad before the Black Prince had won his spurs, and those who do not read old poetry may see it visibly before them in characters of stone. For the developing architecture speaks with no uncertain voice. As early as the reign of Henry II, the massive imperial style of the Normans was beginning to give place to a new order. English freedom was waging a winning struggle against the thoughtful sternness of the conquerors, thrusting up the round arches into lancet points, and narrowing down the heavy columns into the wild and manifold uprush of English Gothic. The process of working out a distinctive national architecture begins with the Angevin Empire, and culminates in the fourteenth century. It is marked by an increasing joy of life, that blossoms in the exuberance and lyric rapture of the decorative style. There is, at first, something a little cramped and gloomy about the Early English; there is energy in abundance, but it is not wholly glad. It was only when the nation became conscious of its own splendour and love-worthiness, that its spirit could expand into the flowing tracery and ever-deepening radiance of the stained-glass window.

Definitely patriotic literature is now becoming common, and the idea of Merry England is no longer strange. Robert of Gloucester, writing just at the beginning of the fourteenth century, prefaces his rhymed chronicle with:

> "England is a right merry land, of all on earth it is best,
> Y-set in the end of the world, as here, all in the west,
> The sea goeth it all about, it stands right as an isle."

It is about this time that we have the attempt to make an English hero out of Richard Cœur de Lion, in a rude epic or romance of the crusades. Little claim had this Poitevin gallant to the name of Englishman, which he

despised. In some respects he was not unworthy to live in the memory of his subjects, for he was a brave and skilful soldier, and, what is perhaps more important, played no small part in the making of our navy. For on the way to the crusades, he gave English sailors the experience of working together in a large fleet, and he was as good and conscientious an admiral as he was a general. But the passing of a century had blurred the memory of his real character, and men had come to think of him as an heroic and almost invincible champion who had led Englishmen to victory, and they had no hesitation in putting Poitevin Richard beside Celtic Arthur. The nation had come to that stage when it was crying out for a hero, and Richard would do as well as another.

That the authors of the legend were not hampered by the tyranny of facts, makes their creation all the more significant of their ideals. It is evident that the legendary Richard is just such a hero as Englishmen of that time wanted to have; it shows what crude and unlovely elements entered into that early patriotism, and how much work Christianity had yet to accomplish. We are justly proud of our Edward I and our Black Prince, but we must not forget how Wallace was dragged on a hurdle to an agonizing death, nor how men, women, and little children were butchered without let in Limoges. But these brutalities pale into insignificance before those of the ideal hero. Richard, the beloved of God, literally revels in shedding blood, and to crown all his other merits, is not only a butcher, but a cannibal. He cures himself of an ague by eating a fat young Saracen, and he entertains Saladin's ambassadors on the boiled heads of their friends. Nor are these tastes peculiar to him alone, for he takes much pride in informing the ambassadors how all his Englishmen share the man-eating propensities of their beloved monarch. Such works are no doubt well-pleasing to God, for on one occasion, when Richard is deliberating

what to do with sixty thousand prisoners, he sees the heavens opened and hears the angels calling: "Seigneurs, tuez! tuez! Spare them not, and behead them!" whereupon:

> "King Richard heard the angels' voice,
> And thanked God and the holy cross."

The pleasing spectacle of a massacre on this huge scale, so cheers the author that he breaks forth into one of those May songs that were becoming common in English poetry.

There can be no doubt of the pride in England and Englishmen that runs through the story. As we might expect, the patriotism is of that imperfect kind, not extinct even now, which holds it necessary to insult and disparage national rivals. Here we find, in its most bitter form, that hatred of the French which has only been removed, or transferred, in our own twentieth century, and the following lines are a fair epitome of the compliments that Englishmen have been wont to pay to their neighbours across the Channel:

> "The French men be covetous
> When they sit at a tavern,
> There they be stout and stern
> Boastful words for to crack,
> And of their deeds yelping make.
> Little worth are they and mickle proud.
> Fight they can with words loud,
> And say no man is their peer.
> But when they come to the myster, [the 'scratch' in modern slang]
> And see men strokes deal,
> Then they begin to turn their heel;
> And begin to draw in their horns
> As a snail among the thorns."*

King Richard is certainly a less pleasant character than Robin, but we must remember that not only is this romance probably earlier than any of the Robin ballads

* Ellis, "Metrical Romances."

that we know, but that the King has to deal with Saracens, towards whom it was hardly Christian to display ordinary human feelings :

> " No man would the dogs bury,
> Christian men rested and made them merry."

We now come to the patriotic poetry of Edward III's reign, which is as whole-hearted and enthusiastic as we could wish to find, but marred by the barbarity of the age. One of the signs of the times is the increasing vogue of the English language, as we gather from the prologue to " Richard Cœur de Lion." The glory of Richard, and the peerless knights of England, his companions, is at present set forth only in French books, which not more than one in a hundred of unlearned men can understand. It was in 1352 that French ceased to be the language of the law courts, and even where it does survive, often in the style of Stratford-atte-Bowe, it is more as an aristocratic fashion than a natural medium of expression. When the English gentlemen were trouncing the French in the field, it was not likely, for all their French ancestry, that they were going to be the victims of Gallomania in hall and bower. In the schools, too, the teaching of French was passing out of vogue, and there was bubbling up such a " well of English undefiled," that the most finicking of dilettantes could hardly seek a more exquisite medium of self-expression.

In the political songs of Edward III's reign, of which we have such an invaluable record in the collection of Mr. Wright, two motives struggle for the mastery. There is the feudal or personal loyalty, which makes every battle-song a record of the prowess and chivalry of various leaders, and every battle a tournament on a grand scale, and there is the patriotism which, in however crude a form, rejoices in the glory of England and the might of her sons. The song which has most of the feudal and least of the patriotic spirit is, as we might well expect, written in

French. This is called "The Vows of the Heron," dates from near the beginning of the Hundred Years' War, and is concerned with the vows made by various courtiers, and finally by the Queen, to maintain "the right of this country," in other words, Edward's impudent claim to the French crown, which is immortalized to this day in the words, "Dieu et mon droit." The charitable spirit of the times finds expression through Sir John de Faukemont, who vows to spare neither church nor altar, man, woman, nor child, kinsman nor friend, as long as any resistance shall be offered to Edward. A little later than this we have a long and violent invective against the French in rhyming Latin couplets, the nature of which may be judged by the beginning: "France, effeminate, pharisaical, devoid of energy, lynxlike, viperish, foxy, wolfish, Medea, cunning, Siren, cruel, bitter, proud," and so on, whereas we ourselves have virtue, dreadless valour and the good King Arthur. A little later we have another Latin poem, in which an imaginary Frenchman and Englishman are pitted against each other in a competition of foul-mouthed abuse. "What," says the Frenchman, "does England breed except cattle? Their stomach is their god," and the Englishman retorts in kind.

It is pleasant to be able to turn from these railing accusations to the work of a genuine, if rough-handed poet. The manuscript of Laurence Minot has only been preserved to us by the luckiest of accidents, but his songs must have been popular enough in their day, for they were hunted up and revived upon the occasion of Henry V's war. They are jolly soldier-songs, fashioned in the roughest of metres, but with a swinging lilt and a careless felicity of phrase, that render them valuable even for the modern reader, and must have given them an immense popularity around the camp fires of our worthy archers. Where, for instance, can we find a more naïvely delicious prologue than is contained in the lines:

" I have matter for to make,
For a noble prince's sake;
Help me God, my wit is thin;
Now Laurence Minot will begin."

The series of nine songs, all of them dealing with Edward's wars, begins at Halidon Hill. Minot has no more liking for Scots than the rest of his countrymen, and he tells them how Edward, for all their wiles, hath wroken revenge for Bannockburn:

" He has cracked your crown, well worth the while,
Shame betide the Scots, for they are full of guile!"

But the best of Minot's songs about the Scots' wars is that about the Battle of Neville's Cross, and contains one verse which, for its quaintness and dry humour, should surely take a high place in patriotic literature:

" When Sir David the Bruce
Sat in his steed,
He said of all England
Haved he no dread.
But hinde John of Coupland,
A wight man in weed,
Talked to David,
And kenned him his creed.
There was Sir David
So doughty in his deed,
The fair Tower of London
Haved he to meed."

Sir John Coupland, by the way, was the knight who kenned David his creed by taking him prisoner.

Minot's other poems, about the battles with the French and Spaniards, are pitched in the same strain. Though the element of personal loyalty, of course, plays a large part in them, his love for his country is never in doubt, and his prayer is:

" Now Jesu save all England,
And bless it with His holy hand! Amen."

There is not the bitterness in them that we have noticed in the other war poems of the time. True, they are none

too civil to Scots and Frenchmen, nor do they display much sensitiveness about the shedding of blood, but their prevailing note is one of burly good-humour, which delights in cracking crowns and making foreigners dance, out of the sheer animal spirits of a healthy schoolboy.

We are now able to form some idea of the first blossoming period of our patriotism. It is one more of hope than achievement. The love of England is still diluted by its mixture with personal fealty, and marred by savagery. Not much of the Edwardian literature has survived, except in records which are sought for only by the erudite. With architecture there is certainly a different tale to tell, and perhaps at that time architecture was a better medium of expression than writing. Most eloquent of all were the feats of arms whereof all Europe rang. The general impression that we glean is one of abounding joyousness, of a nation which has passed through much humiliation and many woes, finding herself and her greatness, taking her place in Europe like a queen among her peers. It is no accident that her singers delight to dwell upon the month of May, for there is something peculiarly spring-like about the age, the high spirits and perhaps some of the rawness and brutality of youth. In the words of Trevisa, " England full of play ! free men well worthy to play ! Free men, free tongues, heart free ! "

The crown and flower of our fourteenth century is, of course, the work of Chaucer, and he is remarkable for being one of the few masters in the very front rank of our literature, whose work seems almost devoid of any definitely patriotic impulse, though he does indeed address Henry IV as the conqueror of Brutus' Albion. His case demands some consideration, for though he took part in the war before the Peace of Bretigny, and was taken prisoner, his life's work falls mainly within the period of gloom and reaction that was the aftermath of

Edward's triumph. Thus, while the joyousness of the earlier period lives on in Chaucer's verse, his outlook upon the state of the nation is, judging by the few fragmentary indications we have, anything but optimistic. He seems, to some extent, to have shared the gloomy view of most of his contemporaries, and we find him writing in such bitter strain as this:

> Truth is put down, reason is holden fable
> Virtue hath now no dominacioun,
> Pitee exyled, no man is merciable.
> Through covetyse is blent discretioun;
> The world hath made a permutacioun
> Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to Ficklenesse,
> That al is loste, for lacke of steadfastnesse."

And King Richard is exhorted, in the envoy, to cherish his people, to show forth the reward of castigation, and wed his folk again to steadfastness.

But Chaucer's work for England cannot, for all that, be over-estimated. He did for our literature what the Black Prince and his archers did for our arms. He proved that an English author, using his own tongue, and dwelling in loving sympathy upon the humblest of his countrymen, could fashion work of immortal beauty, worthy of taking its place beside the masterpieces of European literature. He was a patriot through and through, even if he did not write battle-songs, or hymn the glories of England. There is nowhere any work so distinctively native as the "Canterbury Tales," and even when he goes to Italy or Athens for his material it becomes English under his hands. What makes this doubly noticeable is that he works up all his life towards it, it is an atmosphere that grows upon him. He only attains to the summit of his art when he ascends from the "Romance of the Rose" and the "Tale of Troy" to the gentle dignity of an English prioress, and the homely jibes of the Soumpnour and Frere. The atmosphere which Chaucer creates in the prologue is that

which was so dear to all native writers of his time, the fresh and gracious joy of early spring. Truly might it then be said of English character and English song, that April with his sweet showers had pierced the drought of March to the root.

Another feature of these Tales, which has perhaps not received the attention it deserves, is the intensely democratic feeling that pervades them. The modern belief in the efficacy of Parliaments, which have seldom, if ever, been an index to the real feelings of Tom, Dick, and Harry, has done much to blind us to the real condition of the people in ages when Parliament was admittedly in its infancy. Yet here we have an obviously realistic account of a state of affairs almost incredible to our age of rigid social distinctions. Imagine, to take as close a modern parallel as possible, a colonel in the life-guards, a young squire, an Oxford undergraduate, a bank manager, a chef, the skipper of a tramp steamer, one or two artisans, a publican, a farm hand, the lady-superintendent of a nursing home, and a vulgar old woman of the landlady class, all going together on the same journey, telling each other stories, putting up at the same public-house, and asking the landlord to act as " governor " and also as judge and reporter, and condemning any one who is " rebel to his judgment " to stand drinks all round.

Lovers of Chaucer must agree that this is no over-strained or burlesque comparison. Amid this medley of people, drawn from all classes, there is scarcely the least trace of social distinction recognized as such. The more rowdy members of the company do not poke fun at the knight, because it is impossible to imagine any one taking liberties with a man so gentle and dignified; but the knight unhesitatingly recognizes the host's authority, and joins in the conversation without any veneer of aloofness. When the miller, who is very drunk, swears by arms, blood, and bones that he is going to tell a tale as

good as the knight's, he is allowed to carry his point, and the company are heartily amused. So democratic is the spirit of Chaucer's art, that after having, with rare delicacy, warned his audience as to the nature of this story, he pleads that he must put it down because he has to tell all the tales, better or worse. For these poor men do not preserve the modern attitude of "being on their best behaviour" in the presence of the rich, but give free play to their quarrelsome humours and smutty jokes.

We have laid stress upon this feature of English life, because it shows how completely the nation had been welded together from the social point of view. There has ceased to be the possibility of contempt for the name of Englishman, because that name is equally shared by all classes. Here is the secret of our victories, for while archer and knight would fight shoulder to shoulder on our side, even the most courteous gentleman among our foes scorned to battle on foot. For this state of things the thanks are due, in the first place, to the Church. The parish priest, who is the ploughman's brother, is listened to with unquestioning reverence by the whole company, and speaks with a modest yet perfectly dignified air of authority, which is assumed by none of the others. His long sermon, which would have seemed but dull fare to a present-day audience, is intended "to knit up all this feast and make an end," and to point the way to no earthly bourne, but to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Not that there was any superstitious veneration for all clerics alike. The growing indignation which was to culminate in the suppression of the monasteries, is plainly reflected wherever monks or friars are concerned. But none the less is it evident that the Church, with all her faults, had proved a levelling engine more potent than the ballot or the guillotine was ever to be. The martyr to whose shrine all are wending was he who, in the name of the Church, had hurled defiance at the royal authority,

and stood for the ecclesiastical ideal in its most uncompromising form.

The spirit of independence that animated the people, despite the forms of feudalism and such outrages against liberty as the Statute of Labourers, is attested in building even more decisively than in literature. The fourteenth century saw the triumph in England of the Gothic spirit, and the keynote of Gothic is an energy that not only sustains the tourney of giant thrusts, of which the whole building is the perpetuation, but finds rebellious and individual expression in every detail. The men who chipped stone into patterns, harmonious only by their endless originality, who glorified God by the likeness of his saints and cracked gargantuan jokes in the shape of gargoyles, were more than kings compared with their modern successors, whose divided and specialized toil bears fruit in a monotony of products, whose merit lies in their perfect conformity to type, and into which their maker has infused no jot of his personality.

Nor was it only upon religious houses that the Gothic energy was lavished. We have the best of evidence for believing, that the humblest of all our architectural forms takes its inspiration from this spirit and from this period. The dwellings of the fourteenth-century peasant, wretched mud-built hovels, have long since passed away; the first specimens of our cottage architecture are of the fifteenth century, but we find them inspired by as pure and English a Gothic feeling as Westminster itself. The dwellings, though one may not make too absolute a generalization where local spirit and material differed so widely, were mostly of timber or half-timber construction, and belonged rather to the yeomen than the villeins. It is wonderful how easily the free spirit of the stone churches adapted itself to the goodly medium of English oak. Our village builders took an honest joy in the mastery of natural

forces; they exposed the framework of their buildings for all eyes to see, and the honest yeoman, quaffing his ale by the great ingle-nook, could listen to the clamorous and night-long assault of the winter gale, and see the friendly beams and joists, as he saw the laws, visibly maintaining his little castle against the chaos without. This is carrying us on late into the fifteenth century, but the spirit and atmosphere of these buildings, no less than that of the first west-country cottage stonework, is the pure Gothic of the fourteenth, by which we may safely assign to the blossoming period of Chaucer and the Black Prince, those traditions of village architecture, which have only been finally extinguished by the progressive influences of shoddy and jerry-building.

Even before Edward's triumphs were over, the dark days had begun to set in. The outburst of confident patriotism had been too much honeycombed by its own defects to last for very long. It would have been bad for us and for Europe, if such an ideal, however glorious it may have been for a time, had established itself permanently. All was not sound in the heart of the nation. The foes of union had been scotched but not killed. The reign of Edward II had shown the power and baseness of the feudal magnates, and Thomas of Lancaster was by no means averse to an understanding with the Scots, our enemies in the field. In spite of the democratic spirit inculcated by the Church, the lot of the masses on the rural manors was often a dismal one. "Villeins ye are and villeins ye shall remain," had been the characteristic remark of King Richard the Redeless, by way of evading the promises he had made at Mile End. Even the towns had not, in every case, broken free from feudal bonds; and in such cases as those of Bury St. Edmunds and Lynn, this did much to inflame the peasants' revolt. The Church herself often proved the most odious of landlords, and it was against rich ecclesiastics that the most bitter fury

of the rebels was excited. Even before the congenial task of paying off old scores against the gown, the "townees" of Cambridge paid an uncomplimentary visit to the Priory of Barnwell. The towns themselves, which were now coming to the zenith of their corporate prosperity, had not as yet entirely merged their municipal patriotism in that of the nation. There had even been cases of the folk of the Cinque Ports practising piracy on those of the East Coast.

The fortunes of the war changed towards the end of Edward's reign from bright to dark. Its original and sound purpose had been sufficiently attained by the capture of Calais, and it would have been wise for Edward to have made peace as soon as possible upon that basis. But the centre of interest was allowed to shift from the north-east of France to the south-west, and the flower of English soldiery wasted itself in fruitless marches among the snows of the Pyrenees. Such a war could not succeed in the long run, because the English, who were all too few from the start, were wantonly dissipating their energies, trying to hold great tracts of country with open frontiers and unfriendly inhabitants, and goading a new and powerful enemy into the fray. They were pitting their valour against justice and reason, even though they might accomplish such miracles as a Battle of Poictiers, and though no hostile force dared cope with them in the field. The rough soldiers had some consciousness of this, and when, on one of their cruel forays, they were overtaken by a thunderstorm, their guilty imaginations heard in every crash the voice of an angry God.

What finally ensured our failure from the military point of view was our loss of sea power. In this respect Edward's policy had been the fatal one of encouraging trade on foreign bottoms, with the result that our reserve of strength was gradually depleted. As early as 1371, before any overt disaster had occurred, the peril was

notorious, and was actually the subject of complaint by the Commons. They said that the ancient privileges and franchises of the towns had been taken away, so that they were reduced to poverty and ruin. This evidently refers to Edward's free trade policy of breaking down the restrictions against aliens. Next year came the inevitable catastrophe. The Castilian fleet, huge vessels towering out of the water, as the galleons of the Armada were to do, encountered a miserably inferior force of small ships under the Earl of Pembroke. Honour was saved, but after two days' heroic struggle, weight and numbers prevailed, and the little fleet was annihilated. This was the beginning of a miserable period in our naval annals, and how keenly this was felt, may be judged by the repeated complaints of the Parliaments. With the accession of Richard things had come to a miserable pass. The sovereignty of the sea had utterly forsaken us, and our efforts to regain it were incompetent and spasmodic. French, Spanish, Scottish and even Flemish ships preyed upon our commerce and raided our coasts; expeditions landed and burnt our ports; even the coasting trade was a perilous adventure. There was talk of a French invasion of England, and the preparations caused a wretched panic among the burgesses of London, though there were said to be a hundred thousand Englishmen who desired nothing better than a chance of trouncing the invaders. One incident will serve to reveal what was noblest, and what was most deficient in the national spirit at this time. A Scot, called Mercer, had been harrying the coast of Yorkshire; so John Philpott, a rich Londoner, equipped a fleet at his own expense, recaptured the English ships captured by Mercer, and fifteen Spanish wine-ships into the bargain. For this feat the Council actually took upon themselves to reprimand Philpott. His reply is worth recording: "I did not expose myself, my money, and my men to the dangers of the sea, that I might

deprive you or your colleagues of your knightly fame, nor to get it for myself; but out of pity for the misery of the folk and the country, which, from having been a noble realm with a dominion over other nations, has, through your slackness, become exposed to the ravages of the vilest of races [here we have a characteristic outburst of anti-Scottish prejudice]; and since you would not lift a hand for its defence, I exposed myself and my goods for the safety and deliverance of our country." The earl who had been the mouthpiece of the Council had not a word to answer.

Neither Parliament nor Council showed themselves fitted as yet for the discharge of their high function. Bitter and uncompromising factions contended for power; the landed interest, whose object was dear wool, and the mercantile interest, which clamoured from the narrowest motives for protection against foreigners. A magnate like the Duke of Lancaster was actually able to pack a Parliament to undo the work of its predecessor, and proceedings like those of the Merciless Parliament, in which a few great lords used their power to shed the blood of their most important enemies, go far to justify Richard's final attempt to get rid of Parliaments altogether. The one-sidedness of the representation was revealed in reckless and bitter class legislation. The Statutes of Labourers, and the appalling penalties by which they were sanctioned, may seem honest and impartial enough to modern theorists, but it is fairly evident that the labourers themselves viewed the situation differently. And the wicked imposition of a poll-tax, a shameless attempt to shift the burden of the taxation from the rich to the poor, was at first evaded all over the kingdom, and finally kindled the flame of the peasants' revolt.

We have not yet mentioned the earliest and most terrible calamity of all. This was due to no preventable weakness of man, but to the act of God. We refer, of

course, to the epidemic which swept like a wave over Europe from the East, sweeping off the people everywhere like flies. We need not go into statistics of a half or a third of the population; it is certain that the death-rate was appalling and unprecedented, at the lowest computation, and that the results were of the most far-reaching nature. England was not weakened relatively, for most of Europe was smitten with an impartial hand. But the social system had received a shock, and while the number of manors remained the same, there were fewer hands to work them, and it was natural that these should have hoped to command a higher wage for their services. Perhaps it was equally natural that the masters should have argued, that what was just ten years ago was just now; and as they were represented and the men not, they succeeded in translating their own ideas of fair play into legislation.

On the whole we find, towards the end of Edward's reign, a reaction similar to that which followed upon the triumphs of the Napoleonic War. It is the beginning of a period of depression which lasts, broken by one transitory burst of glory, for about a century. The country had found out its strength, and now it had to submit to the longer and more difficult discovery of its weaknesses. The social system was not yet sufficiently developed to form the basis of the career for which England was destined; abuses which victory had only fostered needed plucking up by the roots, and it was an England purged of many defects, visible and invisible, which was to emerge from the ordeal. It is a consoling reflection, that often during periods of disheartening gloom, the most valuable work is being accomplished silently, and that the drab skies and driven sleet of March do but prepare the way for the advancing budbreak, as well in nations as in nature.

Now that there were no victories abroad to attract men's attention, the condition of the poor began to be felt as a burning question. We are not to assume that

this was necessarily one of extreme or increasing wretchedness, in fact the evidence is the other way. The manors were by no means arbitrary despotisms; such documents as survive show that the services of every one on the estate were calculated with the nicest accuracy. Chaucer's poor men are anything but down-trodden serfs, and even from Piers Plowman we gather that such folk as Cis the shoe-seller, Robin the roper, Hickey the ostler, and Davy the ditcher, were able, on occasion, to enjoy an uproariously good time at the tavern. The fact seems to have been that the rural labourers were well enough off to make such grievances as serfdom and the poll-tax seem intolerable. Something of the spirit of Robin Hood was in the English peasant, and the Men of Kent who bent their bows upon the death of Wat Tyler, had probably learnt in France to regard themselves as very terrible fellows. The English revolt has nothing of the savagery of the Jacquerie. Justice, and not plunder, seems to have been its object, and one man who was caught looting was lynched out of hand. Even knights and gentlemen were found amongst the ranks of the rioters, and such was the loyalty to the King, that a modern writer has ventured upon the improbable conjecture that the boy himself was privy to the revolt.

We can now appraise the teaching of the Wycliffites, which, if it did not cause the rebellion, was certainly part of the same democratic movement of which the rebellion was a symptom. We saw how, during the reign of Henry III, the fortunes of the Church had been restored by the poverty and self-sacrifice of the early friars, and it was such another revival that Wycliffe would have initiated. He desired to bring back the Church to what had been the ideal of its Founder and His apostles, and in the development of his doctrine, he put forward opinions which seemed to lead directly to communism. His system of polity is governed by his conception of lordship, and

God he holds to be Lord in a unique sense. He is, in fact, on a universal scale, what William the Conqueror aimed at being in England—in a direct personal relation with every one of His human subjects. This theory is of far-reaching importance. It asserts the dignity and equality of mankind in the most uncompromising terms, and brings the individual face to face with his Maker, without any popish or priestly intervention. But Wycliffe goes further. Lordship, not only of man but of goods, is conferred by grace, and a man guilty of mortal sin has no right to any property whatever, whilst a good man has a right to everything God has made. This leads us to the belief of the primitive Church, that all goods should be held in common.

But Wycliffe only puts forward these startling doctrines with grave qualification. God, as he puts it quaintly, should obey the Devil, and whatever ideal right a Christian may have to other men's goods, it would be a sin for him to take them by force. There is something in Wycliffe's doctrine not altogether dissimilar from that of Tolstoy, except that while Tolstoy would adopt an attitude of passive resistance to all human institutions, Wycliffe would see in them the necessary results of the sinful state of mankind, and submit accordingly. But a learned man's qualifications to his theory seldom get beyond his own study; the revolutionary teachings of John Ball are merely Wycliffe's doctrine of lordship, as it would appear to a simple common-sense man who had grasped its rough outlines and no more. If good men had a right to all good things, and sinners could own nothing, certainly manorial rights, not being of grace, ought to be abolished forthwith; and if all men were perfectly equal in the eyes of God, "who was then the gentleman?"

As in the teaching of Wycliffe we can detect the germ of modern Liberalism, so in that of another poor man's

friend—the author of "Piers Plowman"—we find a rudimentary Toryism. Piers does not wish to abolish the social hierarchy, or to tinker with institutions, but to see every man, from the highest to the lowest, fulfilling his duty in that station to which God has appointed him, for conscience' sake, and not for gain.

> "No more shall Need be a master, as now,
> But Lowness and Love and Loyalty also
> Be masters on earth, to maintain the truth."

The poem is as democratic in its way as a sermon of John Ball's. Impartially it denounces the sins of the rich; it is written from the point of view and put into the mouth of a typical poor man, and the picture it presents is a melancholy one of the whole nation honeycombed from top to bottom with falsity, greed and wrong—"Woe to the land whose king is a child!"

It is evident that in the opinion of thinking men, something was rotten in the state of this country. In 1370 we have a strange Latin pamphlet by an unknown author who seems to have been under the patronage of Humphrey de Bohun. This takes the form of a pretended prophecy by one John of Bridlington, and the real author is thus able to set forth, in the safest possible way, his interpretation of the past and his speculations regarding the future. He attributes our misfortunes, which were then only beginning, to the sins of the nation, and particularly to those of Edward. Even though the French were more wicked than ourselves, the hand of God had been against us, and that justly. But the prophet hopes for the best, and launching forth into what is perhaps the first of future-war stories, he describes the final victory which was to be the sequel of the desired reformation. A great Franco-Scottish army was to invade England from the north, the whole nation was to rally with a spontaneous ardour of unbought patriotism to its own defence, and this medieval Battle of Dorking was to end

n the most approved fashion with the rout of the invaders. Afterwards Edward was to be succeeded by the Black Prince, who was finally to add France to his dominions. But these triumphs express a pious hope, and it is evident that, as far as the present is concerned, the pretended John of Bridlington takes anything but a rosy view of the state of the nation.

During the last quarter of the century even this note of hope is seldom heard. As we shall discover more than once in the course of our narrative, the frequency of jeremiads is always a mark of some genuine evil, and not, as is usually asserted, the result of a fixed and constant bent of human nature. Bitterness and gloom have succeeded to the joyous confidence of the preceding generation. The poems of poor Richard's reign are as depressing as its history. The death of Edward III removed one who, whatever history may pronounce upon his character, was at least a good fighting king, and was identified in the popular imagination with brilliant victories. We have an English poem of this time lamenting the death of Edward and his warrior sons the Black Prince and Thomas of Woodstock, and drawing a lamentable picture of the ship of State, rudderless and dismantled, drifting to ruin.

Unrelieved depression is now the note of all writers who assay to deal with the state of the times. The Lollards come into prominence, and according to one estimate, their democratic and heretical doctrine had temporarily captured about half the population. The attacks directed against the representatives of established religion were marked by a savagery that was repaid with interest, and bore fruit at last in the fiery torments of "De heretico comburendo." One typical polemic against the minorite friars has the cheerful refrain :

> "With an O and an I, why should they not be shent ?
> It wants nought but a fire that they aren't all brent !

But whether it was the fault of friars or Lollards or magnates or masses, there was a general agreement that the country was in a bad way. "Alas!" begins one Latin poem, "how great a desolation is there of England!" her realm is in peril, her shipping nearly destroyed, she can count upon neither wisdom nor wealth to sustain her, pestilence sweeps the land, her manhood is depleted, Christ is hardly known by Englishmen, her traders make gain by fraud and perjury, her clergy are lechers and money-grabbers, and so on. In 1388 we have another poem in the same strain, written in the quaint and not unmusical alternation of Latin and English which was common during the Middle Ages:

"Sing I would, but alas!
descendunt prospera grata;
England sometime was
regnorum gemma vocata
Of manhood the flower,
ibi quondam floruit omnis;
Now gone is that honour,
traduntur talia somnis."

The most bitter and elaborate of these denunciations is contained in a series of Latin poems by John Gower, who, on account of his uninspired and sermonizing diffuseness, is a poet more heard of than read. He had been high in the favour of King Richard, but, as time went on, his attitude became one of increasing hostility, and even before the end of the reign he indulges in some bold criticism. With his aristocratic sympathies he singles out the Lollards for his first attack, and having disposed of them, goes on to denounce the sins which are ruining the nation; in a second poem he goes through the different orders of society, all of which—clergy, nobles, soldiers, lawyers, merchants, populace—are about equally bad; the third is directed at Richard himself, who was then tottering to his fall. Like Burke, when he was

writing of Marie Antoinette, Gower, if we may believe him, wrote of his country's shame with tears streaming down his face.

One effect of the unfortunate events that followed upon the loss of our sea power was to breed a distaste for war, very different from the spirit of Laurence Minot and the romance of Cœur de Lion. It was perhaps the discipline of adversity, rather than any marked increase of spiritual insight, which made Englishmen begin to suspect that there might be some inconsistency between the profession of Christ's religion, and the delight in slaughter for its own sake. In any case, the blessings of peace are the principal subject of a diffuse complimentary poem by Gower upon Henry IV's accession. Towards the end of the reign we have another, and much longer poem by Hoccleve, Chaucer's disciple, written for the instruction of the Prince of Wales. It is questionable whether the young Henry actually succeeded in wading through this effusion from beginning to end, for Hoccleve is even more prosy than Gower, though he sometimes soars into real poetry, as in his heartbroken lament for his "worthy master honourable." The poem is remarkable not only for its advocacy of peace, but from its recognition of the fact that a Frenchman can be a man and a brother. "I am an Englishman," he says, addressing France, "and am thy foe because thou art a foe unto my allegiance"; but he would prefer to see the two nations joined in the bonds of friendship:

> "If that of you might be read or sung
> That you were one in heart, there is no tongue
> That might express how profitable and good
> Unto all people it were of Christian blood."

In this poem, or rhymed treatise, we hear another note, which was to be repeated with tragic and increasing emphasis up to the very coming of the Armada. This is

the horror of civil war, which the events of Henry IV's and his predecessor's reigns had been well calculated to inspire. The melancholy spectacle of France, torn asunder by her own factions, moved Hoccleve's sympathy, and provided him with an additional warning for his own countrymen. He had good reason for his fears!

We need not dwell upon the Lancastrian tragedy. Except for the few years of Henry V's triumphs, its value for the student of patriotism is of a negative order. The time had not yet come when England could safely afford to dispense with the weight of a central power, and this had been fatally weakened by the misfortunes of Richard. Henry's title was a parliamentary one, and Parliament was as yet incapable of taking over the functions of royalty. In the absence of a strong hand, the country began to drift towards an anarchy of factions.

At one time it seemed as if the House of Lancaster was to dwarf the utmost triumphs of Edward III, and even realize the dream of adding the crown of France to that of England. Fortunately, whether by an overruling providence, or by the impossibility of the attempt, this hope was dashed to ruin. There was less excuse for Henry's war than there was for Edward's. It is true that the French had done us all the harm they could for nearly half a century, and had been in alliance with all our enemies. It is true also that Flanders was threatened with the domination of the House of Orleans. But the real cause that drove Henry into the war, was that this was the only way of making his authority secure at home. As long as he was dazzling the country by his French victories he was sure of a subservient Parliament, and a united nation. Once having started upon his career of victory, it was not easy to stop short at anything except the total subjection of the realm he claimed. Another motive that swayed him was a last flicker of the crusading spirit, now dying away in the glare of the Renaissance.

A desire to embark upon a crusade had been more or less vaguely entertained by his father, and the thing was in the air. The poem of Hoccleve, which we have just considered, concludes with an exhortation to Christian nations to sink their differences and combine against the Infidel, and the peace poem of Gower, at the beginning of the reign, counsels Christian men, if they needs must cherish wrath, to vent it on the Saracens. The Eastern problem had assumed a new and formidable aspect owing to the advance of the Ottoman Turks upon Constantinople. Henry's idea was different from that of Hoccleve, for instead of bringing France into line by friendship, he seems to have hoped to do so by conquest.

That Henry's attempt was fraught, even in the case of success, with disaster to England, is too probable. Already murmurs were beginning to be heard at home against his exactions, and there was even talk of reviving a statute of Edward III, by which the King's title to France should not be allowed to detract in any way from the liberties of England. "Our Lord the King," cries one contemporary chronicle, "after rending every one in the realm who has money, now goes back to France. Woe is me! mighty men and the treasure of the realm will be foredone about this business." It is doubtful indeed whether Henry could have held both realms without the Court becoming in time more French than English. Nor was the war one of which Englishmen could be permanently proud, since it had degenerated into one of conquest pure and simple, and had ceased to represent any genuine need, except in so far as once having set our hands to the plough, it was hard to turn back.

But the first successes, and in particular the crowning triumph of the English bowmen at Agincourt, raised the flame of patriotism to fever-heat. By far the greatest of our patriotic lyrics up to this date is the noble Anglo-Latin hymn of victory, which commences:

" Our King went forth to Normandy,
With grace and might of chivalry ;
The God for him wrought marvellously,
Wherefore England may call and cry,
Deo gratias :
Deo gratias Anglia redde pro victoria ! "

Whatever he may have been during his life, Henry certainly passed into English legend as the type of an ideal patriot. Cœur de Lion and the Black Prince, even Arthur himself, were outdazzled, and in the dark days that were to follow, the name of King Harry was one to conjure with. In the Chronicle of Redmayne, written more than a century after his death, there is a speech put into his mouth which represents him as appealing to the example of Codrus, and saying how detestable was the wickedness of those who wished by crime to lacerate and destroy their country. " For when you have thrown light on all things by spirit and reason, you will find nothing sweeter than your country."

We need not dwell too long upon the slow conclusion of the tragedy that Henry's victories had only masked, and perhaps intensified. While, step by step, we were losing France, at home,

" The land
Reels back into the beast, and is no more."

Dissension and treason were abroad almost before the tomb had closed over the great King's head. The governance of the realm passed into the hands of magnates, who hated each other worse than the enemy. The army languished without support, and as time went on it became a gang of cruel freebooters, recruited indifferently from all quarters. The hand of some supernatural power, whether of heaven or no, seemed to be visibly against England. Towns and districts which we had conquered, sick of our cruelty, declared for our enemies, and swelled their forces. Our sea power was suffered shamefully to decay, and incredible as it may sound, the navy of Henry V was sold to pay his debts. Towards the middle of the

century a couple of crazy hulls represented all that was left of the royal navy of England. At home Parliament gave way to the junta of magnates. The license of individual nobles was great enough to paralyse the central power, juries were intimidated, elections controlled, anarchy everywhere getting the better of order. Statutes were passed, but they were so little enforced as to be almost dead letters. Disgrace abroad, distraction at home, were goading tortured England into the red horrors of the civil war, from which she was to emerge faint and exhausted, but fit to enter upon a second and more glorious stage of her career.

A Yorkist pamphleteer managed to sum up the situation in a striking and accurate way, when he said:

> "I liken England to a garden,
> Which hath been overgrown many year
> With weeds, which must be mown down plain
> And then shall the pleasant sweet herbs appear."

The chorus of jeremiads rises with redoubled bitterness. All the gloomy things that had been said during the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV, are said again with even more mournful intensity. The corruptions of the age are enumerated with grim elaboration of detail, and the love of peace is engendered, as before, by unpleasant experience of the inconveniences of war. We have a poem written in 1443 by Lydgate, which from its flatness of style as well as from its sermonizing and pacific drift, might have been written by Gower, had he lived so long. "God send us peace," he writes, "between England and France!" an intelligible sentiment when we take into account the fact that the French had, by this time, well-nigh cleared their territory of invaders. The horror of civil war is fairly stamped upon the heart of the people, though the end of the trouble was not yet by two centuries.

> "Oh, it is greatly against kind and nature
> An English man to corrumpe his own nation!"

writes the aforesaid Yorkist pamphleteer, and perhaps the most striking instance of this feeling comes from Malory's prose epic of King Arthur, where the tragedy comes to a head in the civil war, which finally destroys the Table Round.

"Lo, all ye Englishmen," is Malory's comment, "see ye not what a mischief here was, for he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and by him they were all upholden, now might not these Englishmen hold them content with him. Lo, thus was the old custom and usage of this land; and also men say that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten that custom and usage. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may nothing please us no term." The account of Arthur's last fight is one of the sternest warnings against civil war in history. There is no joy of battle, only the nightmare horror of rushing and riding, foining and striking, "never was there seen a dolefuller battle in no Christian land." With consummate art, Malory lets us think that peace is accorded, for in this matter, Arthur is glad of peace at almost any price, and then comes the sentence, as dolorous as the winding of Roland's horn: "When the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, they blew beamous, trumpets and horns, and shouted grimly." Not Tschaikovsky himself gave utterance to a cry of more poignant agony than sounds in Malory's prose as he chants the grave-song of heroic Britain.

Patriotism, during the period of dissension, was conspicuous by its faintness. The season of desolation, of the dark night of the nation's soul, was being accomplished. Except mere physical courage, it would seem as if every noble passion was extinguished. Tiptoft, the butcher Earl, Clarence, the double traitor, Richard, the child-murderer, are fair specimens of their time. A series of executions was sweeping away the noblest houses of

England. The only foreign war resulted in the sordid bargain of Pecquigny. But the spirit of the nation was not killed nor weakened one iota by its purgation, and it was necessary for her to go through this discipline of blood and shame, in order that she might be fitted for a nobler calling, and victories more renowned than had fallen to her lot under the greatest of her medieval kings.

The fire of Cressy was not quenched, but smouldering. Of the heritage of Longshanks and the Black Prince we had lost nothing. The French war revealed again and again the bravery of the English common soldier, but the task of holding France was impossible even before Joan of Arc appeared. The siege of Orleans was from the first a desperate venture, undertaken with insufficient forces, and against the will of the commander.✗ But the nation was not inclined to acquiesce in its disgrace; the feeling that the central government was inefficient and corrupt, was what gave its strength to the cause of the White Rose. This sense of discontent inspires the abortive rising of Jack Cade, with which the name of York got to be connected, though he was in Ireland at the time, and his complicity is unproven. These rebels were the men of Kent, whose grandfathers had followed Tyler to Smithfield, but their grievances are this time not social, but political, and the charge against their chief victim is not his oppression of the people, but his sale of Maine to the enemy. York himself was considered to have an untarnished military and patriotic record, in contrast to the wretched Somerset, who was neither brave, clever nor lovable.

In the midst of Henry VI's misfortunes appears a rhyming pamphlet which, as far as statesmanship and patriotism are concerned, is worthy of a brighter age. This is the celebrated "Libel," or booklet, of English policy, which is a manual of statesmanship in rude verse. It treats of the problems of commerce in a way that might at first seem comparable to the turgid commercial pæans of

the eighteenth century, but there is this difference, that whereas the poets of Walpole's age chanted their songs to Mammon with as much pretension to art as if he were God, the author of the "Libel" uses his jingle as a rough and ready machine for fixing his maxims upon the memory. His object is, that we should realize, at all costs, the importance of sea power, and the first stanza of the prologue shows, that bitter experience was beginning at last to make Englishmen realize the secret of English prosperity:

> "The true process of English policy
> Of utterward to keep this realm in rest
> Of our England, that no man may deny
> Men say of sooth this is the best,
> Who saileth north, south, east and west,
> Cherish merchandise, keep the admiralty,
> That we be masters of the narrow sea."

The author points out how advantageous is the position we occupy astride the Channel, with Calais on one side, and Dover on the other, and how we can use it at will to hold up the commerce of any rival nation. Therefore:

> "For the love of God and His bliss
> Cherish Calais better than it is."

We need not follow the "Libel" into all the intricacies of the protective policy it recommends, for the commodities of every nation are treated separately, and it is shown how, by judicious manipulation, it is possible to regulate trade so as to promote British interests. It is on sea power that everything depends, and the chronicles of our history are ransacked in anticipation of Admiral Mahan. Edgar, Edward III and Henry V are held up for the imitation of a degenerate age, as sovereigns who had maintained our lordship of the seas. In addition, the "Libel" recommends that we should complete the conquest of Ireland, which we could easily do in a very short time. The author of the pamphlet is no Jingo, but

a fervent lover of peace. He sees, however, that peace can only be secured by unity and strength at home. As long as other nations see that we are weak they will attack us, and such pirates as Hankin Lyons will make free with our commerce. The author naturally takes a gloomy view of the actual state of the nation :

"Where be our ships, where be our swords become ? "

is his cry, and he confesses that his heart begins to weep. Scanty comfort was there for any patriot heart in these days of England's eclipse !

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# CHAPTER III

## THE TUDOR SYSTEM

THE situation during the third quarter of the fifteenth century is in some respects not unlike that which had prevailed before the Conquest. An old disease called for an old remedy. The Lancastrian regime had left England thoroughly undisciplined. The might of government was scarcely felt, and great nobles were able to set it at defiance with impunity. Godwin himself scarcely held a stronger position than the Kingmaker, and the letters of the Paston family are evidence of a state of lawlessness, which was none the better for incessant litigation. In the Church there was a decay of godliness and learning, the monastic chroniclers ceased from their labours, a worldly and luxurious apathy became characteristic alike of priest and monk, and though relics of primitive sanctitude were found even up to the catastrophe of the Reformation, the Church had ceased to be more than a dead image of the ideals for which she had stood in the days of her vigour. Literature, whose brightness glows or is quenched with the spirit of nations, was in a parlous way, and except for Malory, and possibly Pecock, the work accomplished is perhaps interesting, but hardly great.

The worst trial of all, the shame and incompetence which darkened the reign of the Royal Saint, drew to a close. With suicidal fury, the magnates who had failed to hold France turned upon each other, and struck a

deadly blow at their own order. The War of the Roses was essentially aristocratic, and though the first manifestation of armed discontent had been the rebellion of Jack Cade, the common folk were surprisingly little affected, except during Queen Margaret's dash southward upon London, which began in triumph at Sandal Castle, and ended in the snowstorm of Towton, and the little Yorkshire stream which ran blood for three miles. Towards each other the nobles displayed unrelenting savagery, and, as if they were consciously co-operating with England's good destiny, they let the poor go. Even when the devilish Crookback was cut down on Bosworth Field, the purging was not complete. It was a combination of nobles that had put Henry Tudor on the throne, and a similar combination might upset it. A spirit of anarchy was abroad, and it was easy to rally armies to the banners even of a Lambert Simnel or Perkin Warbeck.

As in a former Royal Saint's days, the thing that England needed above all others was strong government. Even Fortescue, whose doctrines on the eve of Tudor despotism seem so strangely liberal, was conscious, at least in part, of this necessity. The Crown, according to him, must be strong, and rich enough to give it the advantage over any subject, however powerful, and even if, by weakness or imprudence, its resources have been alienated, they ought to be resumed. How to establish and maintain themselves in such a position was the problem that confronted the two able, but not lovable monarchs, who raised their power upon the ruins of the House of York.

In judging of their achievement, we must be on our guard against prejudices born of conditions other than theirs. It is a maxim of politics so obvious in itself as to merit the reproach of platitude, that the greater the danger to which a government is exposed, the less the scope

for liberty as against the government. An extreme case is that of martial law, which is strictly speaking no law at all, and under which men may be punished without trial, and the innocent made to suffer for the guilty. It was the lesson of the French Revolution, that the most plausible forms of Constitution will not survive the ordeal of invasion and rebellion combined. We cannot get a clear view of this Tudor period, unless we look upon it as one of such extreme peril as practically to constitute a continuous state of siege.

The two Henries were so thoroughly successful, that we are tempted to think too lightly of the task they had to perform. But, in truth, the position of a King of England was one of fearful insecurity, and a weak or mediocre man could hardly have failed to go under. Bound up with the fortunes of her rulers were those of England, and never were they more critical. To the eye of a patriot, no prospect could have been much more disheartening than that of his country after the civil war. It is true that the arch-tyrant had gone to his account, but the petty anarchs, though diminished, were unsubdued. The state of the country afforded little food for hope. England had sunk to an insignificant position in European politics, and in thought and spirit she was equally barren. A fair amount of brute courage had been revealed during the course of the war, but this was about the only virtue that could be placed to the national credit. Treachery, cruelty, and absolute lack of patriotism or any other ideal had marked the conduct of the principals. The Yorkists had indeed given England a government more efficient than the one it superseded, but Edward IV was a disappointing ruler. He was certainly as fine a soldier as such a struggle was capable of producing, and he could be as firm and skilful, when he chose, as Henry VI was weak and silly, but he was too bad a man to turn his gifts to account. The secret of his misrule is bewrayed in that

full, sensual face, with its blend of the heroic and the beastly, a Moloch and a Belial rolled into one, He could rouse himself to win a campaign, but he had not the strength of character to apply himself to the serious business of government, and he had fought his way to a crown, not to impose his ideals upon his people, but to give scope to the lusts which were moulding every full curve of lip and throat. Nevertheless, what work he did is not to be despised. He was at least a king, and after the death of Warwick he was able to set his will above that of any man or body of men in the nation. But he did not use his power to set up an irresponsible tyranny, and this would have been easier for him than for any of the Tudors. After Tewkesbury he had the nation at his feet, and it was too much exhausted to be capable of resistance to the power which had struck down king and kingmaker. It is conceivable that an energetic ambitious man, such a one as Crookback, might have contrived, had he been in Edward's shoes, to have set up such an autocracy as was coming into existence across the Channel and beyond the Pyrenees. But he was too lazy, and perhaps too shrewd, to seek for more than the present substance and enjoyment of power. He courted and obtained popularity, and his burly, good-humoured presence was as dear to the Londoners, as that of the Merry Monarch was to be two centuries later. Few men like a saint, except in books, and most Englishmen prefer a genial sinner who is strong enough for them to respect, and the honour of a few City wives was not held too dear a price for such a one. So Edward kept within the forms of law, and thus the Constitution, that most precious heritage of medieval England, was preserved intact through the dawn of the Modern Age.

It is a peculiarity of England that she has, in more than one field, contrived to combine liberty and order in a way that might justly be the envy of other nations.

We shall see how she, and she alone, has solved the problem of Empire by the application of "Imperium et libertas." Equally meritorious was the way in which she contrived to satisfy her need for strong government, without detracting from her liberties, though she held them in abeyance. In France, the States-General was preparing for its volcano slumber; in Spain, the liberties of the provinces were trampled one by one; in Italy, republics became despotisms, and Michelangelo's Evening Goddess flung herself, writhing in marble agony, before the form of her hero who might have been. Too much has been talked about Tudor despotism. The wonder is that in such an age, and with sovereigns so able, the liberties wrested from Plantagenet and Lancaster should have been preserved practically intact.

The political philosophy of the sixteenth century was soon to find its exponent in one of the frankest and most lucid of masterpieces, which was to be the counsellor of every civilized prince, and the butt of every moralist. To what sinister associations do we not link the name of Machiavelli? Old Dr. Johnson growled out, with conscious exaggeration, that the first Whig was the Devil, but the slang of the whole nation has decided that Old Nick *is* the Devil. Even Macaulay, who undertook a partial vindication, rested his case upon the ground that the nature of Italians was so destitute of moral sense, as to applaud cunning for a virtue in itself, and to make a pattern man out of Iago. When we remember how Englishmen had made their Cœur de Lion a cannibal, we need not find anything inherently impossible in the idea that Italians should err as much on the side of cunning as Englishmen on that of savagery. But as a matter of fact, there is no need to accuse the countrymen of the Borgias of a less scrupulous conscience than those of Richard III and Louis XI. The principles of Machiavelli's treatise were not Italian but European, and it is owing to

this fact that even now his book is one of the first to be printed in series of cheap classics.

Nor is it altogether fair to class Machiavelli along with the dismal fraternity of exact scientists in politics. Beneath that serpentine wisdom glows a fire as holy as that of George Meredith's Vittoria, she who said " Italia, Italia shall be free ! " For consider the circumstances in which the man was placed ! He saw Italy the prey of barbarians, the battle-ground of Europe. He had witnessed in his own city the triumph and failure of the moral idealist, when the Florentines had first made a bonfire of their " vanities," and afterwards slew their prophet. The time for exhortation was past, by blood and iron alone could Italy be redeemed. Disunited in cities and small states, she was doomed, but it seemed not too late to create a central power strong enough to enforce unity and deliver the nation. Every other consideration was subordinate to this purpose, and Machiavelli waxes passionate at the thought. Speaking of the heroes of old he says to the Prince : " You have justice on your side, their cause was not more lawful than yours, and the blessing of God will attend you, no less than them. Every necessary war is just, and it is humanity to take up arms for the defence of a people to whom no other resource is left." So might Bismarck, so might Cavour have defended himself.

The case of Italy was that of every important nation in Europe. It was a time of welding together, of uniting divergent interests into one nation. In some cases the failure was dismal; for three centuries and a half the dream of Machiavelli was unrealized and his country continued to be a geographical expression; and Germany, despite the strong hand of Charles V, was drifting through dissension towards the Thirty Years' War. In France and Spain the success of the central power was too great, though its necessity was proved. Only England contrived

to steer a middle course and combine strength with freedom. Her kings had adopted Machiavelli's system before ever "The Prince" was written. Sovereignty was the conception which was to dominate political thought to the days of Bodin and Hobbes, and it was to maintain their sovereignty that these kings bent all their energies. Whatever might be the case at home, to conduct their foreign statesmanship on moral principles was out of the question. They knew the men with whom they had to deal. They knew that no ally would hesitate to leave them in the lurch if it suited his interests; that solemn treaties were worth no more than the paper on which they were written; that "ambassador" and "spy" were practically synonymous terms; that the most cunning of the whole gang of crowned swindlers was the Holy Father himself. They had to fight for their lives, and their country's life, against opponents who knew no law but their own interests and who stuck at nothing if there was the least chance of scoring a point. They had to rule over a nation imperfectly schooled in habits of obedience, over nobles who might at any time levy war against the King in his realm, over a Church whose formal allegiance was given to the least scrupulous of petty Italian despots. They had to do this by their own resources, without a standing army, and among a nation proverbially fickle and thoroughly inured to regicide.

The might of sovereignty is but a preliminary and incomplete ideal, and Machiavelli's system is far from embracing the whole duty of nations. The mere will to power, or the pursuit of efficiency, is obviously only a stage towards something nobler. The young knight may go forth armed cap-à-pie with the prowess of a Launcelot, but what boots it, if instead of delivering the princess, he compounds with the robbers for a share of the spoil? But whether he is to be a good knight or a mighty robber, he must have spent many an afternoon acquiring skill

at the quintain, and that glittering armour took weary months to forge joint by joint. If he had ridden into the forest unarmed and unskilled, he would have fallen a victim to the first knave or the first dragon he happened to meet. It was Machiavelli's aim to unite Italy at any cost, and by any means; but what was to be Italy's achievement when she was united, was a thing he was content to leave to God. It was so with Henry VII, and though Henry VIII had ideals, his practical work was conducted in accordance with the strictest Machiavellian principles.

Connected with this imperfection is another, which makes " The Prince " one of the most dangerous, as well as one of the most able, of handbooks for statesmen. The system not only aims at an imperfect ideal, but it takes no account of the ideals of others. In this, and not in respect of cunning, does Machiavelli's Italian origin reveal itself. He had to deal with a people which was, for the most part, losing its ancient loves, and becoming hard and cynical. He did certainly recognize what we may call the human element, in more than one instance, particularly in respect of the army; for both in principle and in practice he saw the importance of relying on one's own countrymen in preference to mercenaries; but he was building on the sand, and his Florentine militia availed not to save Florence. No Prince, however subtle, could have raised an Italian army fit to stand the shock of the French cavalry, or to break the steady lines of Swiss pikes or German halberds. The problem he proposed was incapable of solution by human means; and so, for all his genius, he can only give rules for carving statues out of quicksilver; and his book gives the impression that it is the duty of the Prince to govern by rule of thumb, treating his subjects like pawns, and thus Machiavelli becomes the first great exponent of the science of kingcraft, or statesmanship without sentiment.

Patriot though he was, the effect of his book was to discourage patriotism.

To understand Machiavelli is, then, to understand the Tudors, and it is unfortunate that with regard to Henry VIII, his best defender has tried to prove too much. Froude, who for all his carelessness was one of the most enlightened and clear-sighted of English historians, saw plainly enough that Henry was almost an ideal king for his age, and accomplished work of inestimable importance for his country. But he went too far when he tried to prove, or at least continually implied, that Henry was not only great but good; and he becomes positively ridiculous when he characterizes that monarch's goatish disposition as being naturally cold. In that hard age there seems scarcely a place for real goodness; the Charterhouse monks, Sir Thomas More, Lady Jane Grey, even the pathetic figure of Edward VI, are borne under sooner or later, even as the most exquisite blossoms are the first to be nipped by May frosts. It is men of a rougher mould who shape the destinies of England at this supremely critical period.

The face of the first Tudor is one not easily forgotten. There is something repellent about that tight-lipped keenness, which tells, as plainly as lines can, that the heart within is less susceptible to warmth than the Polar sea. The cold piercing eye, the ironic smile, the austere sharpness of nose and chin, proclaim not so much the qualities which we usually associate with kingliness, as the business instincts of the self-made millionaire; it seems an embodiment of that dreadful modern idea "success"; and there is no reason to doubt that if Henry had been born into our own age, he would have raised a colossal fortune upon the ruin of many and the slavery of more, bought a country house and a peerage, and sunk to the grave, highly respected by all and regretted by none.

It was natural that such a ruler should not be blind

to the political importance of money. Henry was not exactly a miser, because he understood that he who would acquire must also know how to spend, and he could be profuse, though never generous, when occasion demanded. But he was shrewd enough to perceive that the key to sovereignty was a golden one. As long as the King was short of cash, Parliament could apply the screw to extract almost any concession. Now by far the greatest drain of money is war, and it is noticeable that the times of the greatest royal power are those of comparative peace. Indeed, it is probable that a prolonged and costly war, like that of Edward III with France, would have strained the authority of the Tudors to breaking point.

We must remember that Parliament was not the only, nor even the most formidable power with which the King had to reckon when he was in need of money. We are so accustomed to our routine of annual budgets and the recurring visits of the tax-gatherer, that we find it difficult to realize that there was a time when taxation was an altogether exceptional burden, always met with dislike, and often with open resistance. When a nation is as yet imperfectly united, the levy of money for national purposes is apt to be regarded as robbery. It was the medieval theory that the King should live of his own, and this is the main contention of Fortescue's treatise. The grant of a tax by Parliament was only the first of the King's difficulties in obtaining the money. The method of collection was corrupt and costly, and the Venetian ambassador went so far as to say that only a quarter of the money collected found its way into the treasury. But the King was fortunate if he could get the money collected at all without bloodshed. The many insurrections and tumults, great and small, that broke out in different parts of the country, even when their avowed purpose was religious or dynastic, were seldom unconnected with a subsidy. In the Newburgh manuscripts we

read how, in the twelfth year of Henry VII's reign, "there was great trouble in the land; for such strictness of divers gelds which the King and his Council had laid in many of the chyrys in England, so the commons of Devonshire and Cornwall rose in great hosts against the King," and how in the next year, "the aids and gelds were gedurde that were laid afore that time for the King's great need in his wars." In the Parliament of 1523, when Wolsey came down to the House to demand a huge subsidy, it was not only the Cardinal's tyranny that members had to fear. An enraged mob surged round the House. "We hear say, my masters, that you will grant four shillings in the pound. Do so and go home, we advise you!"

We shall best realize the true state of the country from the vivid account of a rising in Essex, in the valuable, but hitherto untranslated, chronicle of the Welshman, Ellis Griffith, who was one of Wolsey's retinue. He tells us how the people who laboured in the country were as loth to pay a tithe of their goods as the men of London. It was expected that the men of Kent, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, the same counties which had taken part in Wat Tyler's rebellion, would rise at the sounding of bells. The Court got wind of this, but they were too late to prevent the assembly of some ten thousand men about Lavenham, which is on the borders of Essex and Suffolk. Should an armed riot take place nowadays, first the police, and afterwards the King's troops would be sent to the spot. In Wolsey's time neither of these resources was available, and the King had to fall back upon the dangerous support of the local magnates. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk were sent to raise an army out of their own retainers, and nip the rebellion in the bud. The Duke of Suffolk wanted to attack and destroy, but the Duke of Norfolk, who had good reason to suspect that his own tenants were in sympathy with the rising, was in favour of a more humane course. A genuine sense of injustice was aroused by the

tax, and it was reported that the men were quite willing to subscribe instead a large sum of money to the King as a New Year's gift. The common man was more apt to regard his taxes as presents than necessary contributions to the national welfare.

The two Dukes now began to parley with the people, who all talked at once; so they bade them return, press their heads together, and either fight or appoint some one to state their grievances. Accordingly a deputation of sixty men in nightshirts was appointed to make submission, but on their return, the more rowdy section of the crowd got the upper hand, and dispatched certain of their comrades to sound the alarum. However, a rich man had taken the wily precaution of removing the clappers, and the bell-ringers, instead of returning, stopped to make a riot in the town. The mob outside, believing themselves deserted, lost heart, and this time surrendered unconditionally. Their leaders were imprisoned for a while in the Fleet, but the Cardinal, who was an Eastcountryman himself, treated them generously, and after a severe lecture sent them home with their prison expenses paid, and a handsome present for each man to go on with.

Such was the England with which Tudor Henries had to deal, a people turbulent and hard to govern, with a rough sense of justice and a readiness to revolt at the slightest provocation. No one could tell where the fire, always smouldering, might break into flame. It might be in London, in Essex, in Lincolnshire, in Cornwall, or most frequently of all, in the north. The strongest king was bound to be sensitive, and much more sensitive than a modern Parliament, to the will of his subjects. It would be of little avail to secure an obedient majority for this or that imposition, when, if it was felt to be unjust, the people would fight rather than pay.

Thus it was essential to the success of the Tudor policy that the King should live of his own as much as possible,

and refrain from worrying the people or strengthening the hands of Parliament, by heavy or frequent taxation. How to compass this object was their master problem, and the measure of success they enjoyed was the secret of such power as they wielded. The levying of benevolences, though less constitutional, was more popular than subsidies, because it was a tax which fell directly upon the rich. The same argument could be alleged in favour of the vexatious and often scandalous methods of levying fines on the well-to-do, by which the names of Empson and Dudley have gained their sinister notoriety. In all these matters the Tudor hand was heavy upon the magnates but light upon the people, and this explains the constant loyalty which surrounded the throne. The plunder of the monasteries was an expedient of a more questionable order, for shamefully as the monks had neglected their duties they were often good friends to the poor, and the most dangerous and widespread of all the revolts was the Pilgrimage of Grace. But it was safer to confiscate the property of fat abbots, who were often the hardest of landlords, than to rifle the savings of peasants. One little incident will serve to show how very sensitive were the country-folk when their pockets were touched. In 1523 a certain Peter Wylkynson, of the village of Geyton, was heard to say, in reference to the tax, that if every man would follow his example, he would take "him" by the crown and pull him down. "Whom," said the vicar, "would you pull down?" and Peter answered, with jingling disloyalty, "Harry with the crown." There must have been a good many Peter Wylkynsons scattered up and down the villages of England.

But it was not only by tapping new sources that the Tudors contrived to avoid oppressive taxation. The greatest drain of money is war, and in spite of the dangers to which they were exposed down to the time of the

Armada, they were successful in keeping out of any struggle that called forth the whole energies of the nation. The French War of Henry VI had damped our fighting spirit, and the spectacle of civil war cannot have helped to mitigate the desire for peace. Henry VII was particularly fortunate in the circumstances of his accession. Though he had won the crown by his sword, he was not a warrior by nature, and he knew that a war would make quick work of his hard-won treasure. The cupidity of the King and the weariness of the people made common cause, and though England had, by the end of the reign, vastly enhanced her importance, it was by diplomacy and not by the sword. Both Henry VII and Edward IV had discovered the rare secret of making war pay. Edward's bargain with Louis XI at Pecquigny was less discreditable than that of Charles II with another Louis, but it served the same purpose, that of making the King independent of Parliament by foreign money. Henry VII deliberately used the national enthusiasm to collect money for a war which he refrained from waging.

The desire for peace is reflected in the two most important English political treatises of the early sixteenth century. In poor Edmund Dudley's "Tree of Commonwealth," composed when he was in prison and under the shadow of the block, we find that the five roots of the tree are the Fear of God, Truth, Justice, Unity and Tranquillity. Concerning the last of these he says: "Outward peace is very necessary, for war is a marvellous great consumer of treasure and riches; for I suppose a right good treasure is soon spent in a sharp war. . . . The beginning seemeth a great pleasure, but the way is very narrow to come reasonably out thereof, and then oftentimes full painful. Besides that, it is very dangerous for the soul and the body." The point of view of such a monarch as Henry VII could not have been better stated than in this treatise of his ablest minister.

Sir Thomas More, both as a scholar and a Christian, was a lover of peace, and the intensity of his devotion has caused him to be somewhat misunderstood. It is well known that he gave the countenance of his Utopians to such devices as assassination, and hence it has been wrongly supposed that he was led astray by the Renaissance and Machiavelli. But Sir Thomas's point of view was wholly different from that of the Florentine, and more characteristically modern. He regarded manslaying upon a large scale with such aversion that he sought to strip it of its trappings of honour, and to get it regarded as a business which might perhaps be necessary, but which was as nasty as pig-killing. Again, he is an exponent of the view, which was also that of the eighteenth-century "philosophes," that war is usually not an affair of peoples but of kings. Hence the Utopians avoided war as much as possible, but when they had to fight, they did so in a thoroughly unsentimental and businesslike way. They made no scruple about promoting the murder of the enemy's king, because they considered that kings were usually the worst offenders, and that by procuring the death of one guilty man they would be saving the lives of many innocent on both sides. In the first part of his book More is explicit in his condemnation of wars of conquest, and his criticism of Francis I—that he would have been better occupied in looking after his own realm than in conquering the Milanese—is obviously intended to have its application to English designs on France. But despite his suggestiveness and breadth of view, there is that in More which stamps him as a statesman of the cloister, and perhaps the most notable instance of this is the countenance he gives, for practical purposes, to the use of mercenaries. The formation of a national army had been the chief thing for which Machiavelli had pleaded. But Machiavelli knew the world he lived in, while More never seems quite in touch with its brutalities,

and hence it is that his own essays in government form such a woeful contrast to his precepts. He was half a cosmopolitan in theory and wholly a failure in practice.

After the useful, but not inspiriting reign of Henry VII, the country was ripe for a patriotic revival. It was waxing prosperous from a material point of view, despite the fact that a deadly and recurrent epidemic in the shape of the sweating sickness had made its appearance. Henry VII, true to his character as a king of business, had paid much attention to commerce, and had concluded some successful bargains with rival nations, besides pursuing an active policy at home and abroad with the object of promoting industry, and thus, indirectly, of keeping his own coffers full. Such measures, apart from their other merits, were admirably calculated to forward the work of union, for sentiment is apt to follow policy towards a national ideal.

To a certain extent there was a revival of the kind we have indicated, though its results were somewhat meagre, and never attained that blaze and buoyancy of patriotism by which other great periods in our history have been distinguished. The new King was certainly a contrast to the old skinflint who begot him, and his temperament was so robustly English as to give him at all times a ready road to his subjects' hearts. A monarch who could outshoot his own archers (though we may be permitted to doubt whether a wise archer would be too eager for victory in such a contest) was evidently what we should now call a good sportsman, a quality which covers, in English eyes, a multitude of kingly sins. His coarse outspokenness was also in his favour, and " Bluff King Hal " was a notable term of endearment on the part of a people who loved to sing of " Jolly Robin." The Puritan spirit was a thing of the future, and in Renaissance England men liked a monarch who was one of themselves and shared their amusements, who loved pageantry as they did, who kept

a heavy hand upon the magnates, and who was as proud of his country as were his subjects. He was by way of being a theologian, and in this, as in other matters, he was a staunch Conservative. He denounced the Lutheran heresy in a dull but very orthodox treatise, and he encouraged the use of the bow at a time when archery was giving way to gunnery. All these qualities were to prove of inestimable worth to him, when the loyalty of his subjects was strained almost to breaking point and there was but a step between him and ruin.

It was natural that, with such a temperament, he should have been inclined to revive the old glories of Henry V and the Black Prince, and at one time he was mooting to the Emperor grandiose schemes about the partition of France. These were the idlest of dreams, for the monarchy of Francis I was immeasurably stronger than that of mad Charles VI, the battle-ground of Burgundians and Armagnacs. Nor was the English nation endowed with the same fitness to win as had been the secret of its success at Cressy and Agincourt. The first of Henry's military ventures ended in a disgrace, happily unique in the annals of British arms. A ragtag and bobtail army was landed in Spain under the Marquis of Dorset, to co-operate with Ferdinand, who was shamefully remiss in holding to his own part of the bargain. The climate was intolerable, the transport arrangements in a state of chaos and the service unpopular, so in the end the troops mutinied and went home. As Margaret of Savoy very truly told Sir Thomas Boleyn, the English had refrained from war so long that they were grown weary of it. There was some truth, too, in Sir Thomas' retort that three years would show that British troops were neither weary nor inexperienced, for the next year saw the two victories of Flodden and the Spurs. The defeat of the Scots was especially satisfactory, as it was the result of a genuine national rally under the stimulus of invasion,

and the too easy success in France was consoling to English pride, if not very profitable. At the same time a determined effort was made to revive the prestige of the navy. Henry VII had, to a certain extent, fostered sea power, for he was a good enough business man to be aware of the value of insurance. His son was actively interested in the navy, and not the least of his glories is that he so cherished it, that when, at the end of his reign, the hour of trial came, the invasion of England was found to be an impossibility.

The family of Howard, which numbered among its members the victor of Flodden, and from which was to spring the conqueror of the Armada, sacrificed to England a victim less honoured, but no less worthy of honour than his two more fortunate kinsmen. The tragedy of the young admiral, Sir Edward Howard, is one of the saddest in our annals, because it seems as if he might have achieved a career of untold usefulness. He is one of those stars who flash across the night of time, only giving us the opportunity to realize their exceeding brilliance before their light is extinguished for ever. The best monument we have of him comprises but four mutilated letters, calendared among countless other State papers. But these are enough to stamp their author a man of the same calibre as Drake himself. Howard was intensely proud of his fleet, and we find him giving the King minute particulars of the way each ship sailed, ending up by saying that never was there such a fleet in Christendom. A little later he writes, in face of the enemy: "Sir, we have them at the greatest advantage that ever men had. Sir, God worketh in your cause and right. . . . Sir, the first wind that ever cometh they shall have broken heads that all the world shall speak of it." Then Howard disappears. He had essayed that which would have rejoiced the heart of Nelson, to take his boats and board the French admiral's ship in her moorings. The last we see of him is a

pathetic figure, alone on the deck of the Frenchman and calling his men to come aboard; then, seeing that he called in vain, casting his chain and whistle into the sea that no foreigner might boast the spoils of an English admiral, and at last pushed backwards over the bulwarks by many pikes, never to be seen again.

The first successes of Henry's reign found a poet in John Skelton, a Jingo of the most scurrilous order, though much may be forgiven to the author of "Merry Margaret." His pæan of rejoicing over Flodden is anything but pleasant reading, and does not speak well for the nation which could find no better poet to hymn a victory in which the vanquished Scots, who fell one by one around the body of their king, might have claimed something better from the victors than heartless jeers. Take the following as a specimen:

> "Continually shall I remember
> The merry month of September,
> With the XI day of the same,
> For then began our mirth and game.
> So that now I have devised,
> And in my mind I have comprised
> Of the proud Scot, King Jemmy,
> To write some little tragedy.
> For no manner consideration
> Of any sorrowful lamentation,
> But for the special consolation
> Of all our royal English nation."

And so on, at some length; nor is there any need to fatigue the reader with the recital of such unchivalrous doggerel. The spirit of Skelton is that of a nation little accustomed to war and less to victory, and at the first gleam of success losing all sense of decency and dignity.

After the French victory, and with the laurels of Flodden at his feet, King Henry was at the height of his power and fame. He was, at this time, the special friend of the Pope, and men looked upon him as the destined champion of Christendom. Mr. Fisher quotes the opinion

of a contemporary observer as typical of the dreams of which he was then the hero. " Let all Christian princes take example from this unconquered King and be prepared to pour out wealth and blood as he has done in defence of the Church, to gain both from God and man the same reward from their labour " ; and another, an Italian, said that he did not seem to be a man of this world, but one descended straight from heaven. To the King it might well have seemed that he himself would be another and greater Henry V, conquer France, and go to Constantinople to take the Turk by the beard. It was under his auspices that the cult of Agincourt again became fashionable, after having fallen into neglect, and we have already alluded to the fierce patriotism that fires the chronicle of Redmayne.

But Henry's England was little fitted, as yet, to enter upon a career of victory. The time of probation was only half accomplished, and dark and bitter were the days in store before its fulfilment. When a nation is dumb, it is seldom great of heart, and the England of Henry was without a song. Perhaps her noblest product was her architecture, but the joy and freedom of the Decorative style was quenched. With the reaction that followed upon the first half of the fourteenth century, the Gothic energy died away. The worldliness of the Renaissance marred the flowing and heaven-aspiring lines of the Middle Ages, and the tendency was for the vertical everywhere to give way to the horizontal, in other words for heart and energy to yield to intellect. All this was natural enough to the Italians, who had never taken very kindly to Gothic, and who produced a noble and consistent architecture upon intellectual principles; but the vigour of England was not dying, like that of Italy, but only in abeyance. The two styles mixed awkwardly, and produced the weak and formal compromise of the Perpendicular.

It was not from lack of opportunity that the England of the early Tudors missed creative greatness. It is a habit too frequent among modern critics to trace, in abundant detail, this or that foreign influence in native literature, and then to talk as if these foreign influences were the sole or main source of its beauty. No people has ever kindled the white heat of inspiration unless by the fire in its own soul. Foreign artists and authors have often suggested new and beautiful methods of expression, but to no purpose unless there was something to express. Surely no age has ever been so rich as our own in the spoils of all time, and surely never has age produced so little work of the first order. In what was Æschylus richer than Seneca, or Shakespeare than Pope?

The early Tudor period is a case in point. Never, looking at the matter from what we may call the purely literary point of view, was England so ripe for a revival. She had already native models in abundance, the ease and melody of Chaucer, and the prose, faultless in its own sphere, of Malory. Not only was the old known and honoured, but the free thought of the Renaissance was everywhere beginning to penetrate and leaven the more cultured part of the nation, to the disgust of such critics as the Duke of Norfolk, who declared that it had never been merry in England since the new learning came in. Never had the zeal for education been so intense, and it was the dream of Cardinal Wolsey to be the founder of a university in his own native town. The greatest of all the humanists found a home in England, and English scholars travelled eagerly to Continental centres of learning, and rivalled their instructors in all manner of erudition. Royalty itself honoured and patronized the new learning, and such names as Linacre, Colet, Grocyn, and More himself were duly honoured in a nation commonly supposed to be indifferent to the claims of intellect.

With such a wealth of talent, and such laudable

enthusiasm, we can scarcely refrain from surprise at the meagreness of the results. We may not withhold a tribute of honour from those gifted and selfless men, who passed their lives, without ostentation and without any taint of charlatanry, in the quest for truth, nor may we dispute the ultimate value of their labours. They sowed, if they did not reap. When the day of awakening dawned, when Shakespeare walked unguessed at, in the streets of London, and the cannon of Philip was heard in the narrow seas, then it was that the harvest of these scholars was garnered by labourers more fortunate. Then it was apparent how the language had been transformed and enriched since the days of Chaucer, and how, in a thousand ways, the new learning supplied new channels of expression. But that time was as yet distant by more than half a century. Not even the Lancastrian period is quite so barren as that of the early Tudors in works of immortal beauty. With one single exception, the English humanists are but names to the ordinary Englishman. The extant works of Grocyn might almost be comprised on Mr. Balfour's half-sheet of notepaper, and who now reads Colet or Lily or Linacre? As for More himself, his reputation with posterity reposes not upon an English, but upon a Latin work. In poetry, all the impulse of humanism could not even produce a work in any way comparable to the "Battle of Maldon" or the "Cuckoo Song," still less to the "Canterbury Tales." Towards the end of the reign we have some graceful lyrics from Wyatt, and some interesting experiments on the part of Surrey, but nowhere any work of commanding genius, nowhere anything in the grand style. Not all the scholarship of all the humanists could clothe with inspiration the dry bones of English literature.

The early triumphs of Henry VIII were transitory and unproductive. The nation was pleased with anything calculated to tickle its vanity, but its soul was not in

military adventure, and when it came to paying, even Henry's power proved insufficient to bend it to his purpose. Besides, it was soon apparent that very little was to be achieved by force of arms, and the chances were that England would merely be pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for the more skilful but no less scrupulous diplomatists of France and Spain. Henry's real work lay at home, and we must return to the task of unification to which he and his father devoted their chief energies. Already the power of the nobles had been taken in hand, and their capacity for mischief had sensibly diminished since the Wars of the Roses. Henry VII had curbed them with severity and even injustice, and no consideration of past service, nor present hospitality, was of any avail for him who set the law at defiance. One of the wisest and most successful measures was the institution of the Star Chamber, a court powerful enough to try the most exalted offender without having anything to fear from intimidation. The method of dealing with great offenders was that of martial law, to strike the moment they became a source of danger, without troubling overmuch about the formalities of justice. It is the habit in lawless communities, when a man moves his hand towards his pistol, to fire first, if possible, without further ceremony, and this was the principle upon which these Tudor kings acted.

Especially severe was the treatment of any one whose birth placed him near enough to the crown to put him under the suspicion of aiming at it. If a Lambert Simnel could wage sharp war against the King in his realm, how much more dangerous was an undoubted scion of the House of York? Few stories are more pathetic than that of the young Earl of Warwick, imprisoned in the Tower for no crime, allowed to languish without freedom and without knowledge, and finally judicially murdered on some trumped-up charge. Scarcely less cruel seems the

case of Sir William Stanley, who had put the crown upon the King's head, and forfeited his own for no ascertainable reason, except that he was under suspicion of being a dangerous man, and was supposed to have let fall some remark or other to the effect that if Perkin Warbeck really had been the son of Edward IV, he would not have put on armour against him. Henry VIII's victim, the Duke of Buckingham, seems to have been no more than a vain and shallow young man, with an unruly tongue and a dislike of Wolsey, but he was conceited and incautious enough to draw attention to himself, and at once he was marked down for destruction. A nobleman's life could not have been a happy one, when the idlest word might be his death-warrant. Among the articles of Buckingham's indictment for high treason, we find it alleged that a certain monk had told the Duke he should be King, on which the Duke said he would be a righteous prince if it came to pass; and again that he wished the nobles would break their minds, for few of them were contented, so unkindly were they handled. The two Henries did in fact create, upon a smaller scale, the same kind of "terror" as prevailed during the French Revolution, and with much the same excuse. The peril from potential rebels was conceived to be so great, that necessity, which may be the plea of patriots as well as tyrants, was considered strong enough to warrant the striking down of any conceivably dangerous character without mercy, and upon suspicion.

In another way the Tudors essayed to break the power of the nobles; by placing the reins of government in the hands of new men, entirely dependent upon the Crown. It must have been bitter indeed to such scions of old houses as poor Buckingham, to see a butcher's son lording it over them and out-dazzling their splendour. One of his offences, perhaps the one which really sealed his fate, was that he had said something about cutting off the

Cardinal's head. In the old days, when a royal favourite had presumed so far upon his master's favour as to beard the nobility, vengeance had been swift and terrible. But now these upstarts assumed more than royal magnificence, and the nobles could only grumble, not too loudly, and submit. The system had another advantage. The new man was utterly at the King's mercy. Once the royal favour was withdrawn, for any cause or caprice, he was left naked to his enemies. The ministers were a buffer between the throne and the people, for if the King's policy was unpopular, it was always possible to throw the blame, and even the punishment, upon the favourite.

The Star Chamber was but one phase of the prerogative jurisdiction that was developed so freely by the Tudors. It was fortunate that Henry chose this way of evading the Common Law, rather than direct frontal attack. A suggestion had come from Reginald Pole, that he should push the Tudor system to its logical conclusion by making Roman law the law of England. Perhaps Henry knew better than to assail that impenetrable forest. It was not the Tudor habit openly to defy national sentiment, and the law was deeper rooted than the Papal Supremacy. But few were inclined to murmur at the Common Law being supplemented and held in check by what, if an irregular, was an essentially popular jurisdiction. For beside the Star Chamber, that terrible engine for breaking the proud, stood the Court of Requests, which represented a genuine effort on the part of the Crown to provide a cheap and speedy remedy for poor men against the rich, and even went so far as to send the rich man to gaol, to make him think better of evicting the poor man. Such a case is on record.

The reign of law was far from being the recognized thing it has since become. On one occasion the assizes of Taunton and Bridgwater were broken up by armed ruffians, and outlaws of a less attractive stamp than

Robin were able to hold their own against such forces as could be brought against them. Much has been made out of exaggerated reports of the number of victims during the reign, but the rope was the only cure for such desperate characters as could be laid by the heels, and the terror which proved effective for the greater offenders was equally necessary to overawe the criminal, especially in the absence of any proper prison system. Henry was determined to be no respecter of persons, and one of the most striking events of his reign is the execution of young Lord Dacre, who had killed a man in a poaching affray, and was not unnaturally an object of sympathy. Nowadays it is more than probable that influence could have been brought to bear for the commutation of such a sentence; but birth and compassion were no arguments with Henry, and the young lord had to suffer death like any other murderer.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REFORMATION

THERE was another influence besides that of the nobles which tended to make good government impossible, and with this Henry VIII also set himself to deal. This is not the place to go into the vast and complicated problems of the Reformation, and we must content ourselves with indicating in what respects the change from Roman to Anglican tended to promote national unity. The Church exercised only a shadow of the power which had made King John tremble on his throne, and the opposition to her pretensions was no new thing. The Law of Præmunire, as Wolsey was to find, only slept. But the Church's privilege, though no longer terrible, was still irritating, for not only did it conflict with the proper administration of justice, but fostered an allegiance which was in direct conflict with patriotism. The student of Henry VII's reign must be struck with the way in which the most dangerous offenders were in the habit of claiming sanctuary, and either coming out, like Lord Lovell, to try another chance, or else, like Perkin, escaping the full penalty of their misdoings. Anybody who could read, or even learn the fifty-ninth Psalm by heart, could escape altogether out of the clutches of the judge, were his record never so black. Again, the Church had a law and jurisdiction of her own, which was capable of being used with deadly effect for the fleecing of unfortunate laymen.

Her primitive enthusiasm was almost cold; her function of relieving the poor was imperfectly performed; her prerogative of mercy had become a positive nuisance. Her pretensions were, in fact, an anachronism, and it was imperative that they should be crushed sooner or later.

In the matter of the divorce, which fired a long-prepared train, there is no need for us to have any particular sympathy with the plaintiff's case, in order to perceive the intolerable nature of the tribunal. Had an Innocent III or a Hildebrand boldly denounced the royal adulterer, and thundered at him bulls of excommunication or deposition in case of his refusal, such conduct might have at least commanded respect, though it might have failed of obedience. But that such a shifty and timorous fellow as the Medici Pope should have been able, from no motive higher than that of his own supposed interests, to delay indefinitely, and frustrate ultimately, the arrangements which a King of England sought fit to make for the welfare of the realm, and the perpetuation of his line—this was plainly intolerable.

The struggle between Henry and the Pope was essentially political and not theological. Henry never receded from his position as the champion of dogmatic orthodoxy, though to strengthen his European position he did not stick at siding with Protestants, and even Anabaptists. But the question, which had already been answered in so many different ways, now called for a final solution—was the King of England to be master in his own realm? As regards the nobles, that answer had already been recorded in letters of blood, and the turn of the Church might not be long delayed. But few of us can realize how terrible were the risks involved. We are apt to look only at what has been, and forget what might have been. We see in the coarse face and huge form of Henry, the image of brutal tyranny; we read of a succession of queens divorced and beheaded, of the long line of pathetic

and often admirable victims, of a career which from the cradle to the grave seems one of such continuous successes as to be almost a mockery of God's providence. We who watch, from some distant cliff, the proud ship glide into harbour over an expanse of calm water, are only conscious of the ease and grace with which she answers to the helm, little recking of the pilot's almost breaking nerves, as she threads her way between rocks uncharted and barely submerged.

Whatever faults we may attribute to Henry, we must at least grant that he was possessed of courage. In his defiance of the Pope he was doing a thing that in all human probability must end in humiliation, if not death, for himself. He was not only setting at defiance the opinion of Christian Europe, but that of his own subjects. The cause of the Queen was one peculiarly calculated to arouse the sympathies of Englishmen. She had deserved well of the country, for it was she who had organized the great national rally which resulted in Flodden. The King's amours with Anne Boleyn were common knowledge, and a common scandal. When the King went abroad, the women openly insulted Anne, and reproached her with the term of greatest abuse known to their sex. Even when she was crowned, amid every circumstance of pomp and pageantry, the people refused her the tribute of ordinary respect, and her jester tried to relieve his mistress' feelings, by telling the crowd that they would not take off their hats, because they had scurvy heads.

Even the Parliament elected in 1529, which is usually regarded as so subservient, was at one time perilously near mutiny. For this we have the testimony both of the English chronicler and the Emperor's ambassador. From Hall, we learn that a motion was actually before the House advising the King to take back his wife, and that the King had to use his powers of persuasion with the Speaker in order to get it dropped; from Chapuys,

that on the King's soliciting Parliament with regard to the defence of the Scotch frontier, two worthy men, with the general approval of the House, urged that since the Scots could do nothing without foreign aid, and since the best fortification was justice at home and friendship with the Emperor, the wisest plan would be for the King to abandon his scheme and take back his wife. The very agents of Henry were beginning to waver, the common people were murmuring, the nobles disapproved. The Duke of Norfolk, after a wrangle with Anne, was said to have called her " grande putain," and in the same letter of Chapuys, on New Year's Day, 1535, we read the ominous words that, " the Earl of Northumberland is not too well pleased either with the King or his ministers, as the said Earl's physician informed me two days ago, declaring that his master said the whole realm was so indignant at the oppressions and enormities now practised, that if the Emperor would make the smallest effort, the King would be ruined." We catch only faint echoes of the murmurs that must have been swelling in hall and cottage over all the kingdom. We find Lord Darcy, the subsequent rebel and traitor, eagerly intriguing with Chapuys for the armed support of the Emperor, and talking about 1600 gentlemen in the North who were only waiting the signal to rise. Subsequent events showed that Darcy was not exaggerating. Lord Dawbeny talked with obvious approval of a rising of the priests, while men of lower status were denouncing the King as a false wretch, a bawdy wretch and a tyrant, one bibulous individual having even declared that he would kick his sovereign's head like a football.

With his whole population discontented and ripe for rebellion, Henry might well tremble to think of the danger which threatened him from abroad. The mighty Emperor, whose sway extended from Vienna to Cadiz, and from Naples to Flanders, was bound by every con-

sideration of honour and affection to avenge the wrongs of a kinswoman; and his rival of France, though he might avail himself for the moment of Henry's support, was a more than doubtful friend, and was at this time manifesting an ominous zeal in the conversion of heretics, having them dipped, by an ingenious contrivance, in and out of the flames, a form of amusement with which the Most Christian King was wont to beguile his leisure. Whatever the exigencies of the hour might dictate, there was no doubt concerning the natural sympathies of Charles and Francis, while as for Scotland, her hostility went without saying. The century had already seen the greater part of Europe leagued together for the plunder of Venice, and the motives impelling the powers against England were more obvious than those which had united the allies of Cambray. At any moment Henry might have found himself without an army and with a mutinous people at his back, compelled to face a Franco-Imperial-Scottish-Papal alliance, and what chance could he then have had of averting ruin?

In this terrible situation his nerve never appears to have failed him for a moment, except if it be when he told the nuncio, almost with tears, that he had only put the Queen away because she used such high words and was always threatening him with the name of the Emperor. It appears to have been the impression of that most shrewd observer, Chapuys, that he could only be bluffing. But Henry never looked back for a moment. He saw that the situation was desperate, and desperate and decisive were the measures he took to meet it. After the final breach with the Pope, we have a document in Cromwell's handwriting, which shows the temper in which it was resolved to face the danger. The Government was bracing itself for a supreme crisis, and practically putting the nation in a state of siege. "To appoint the most assured and substantial gentlemen in every shire to be sworn of

the King's Council, with orders to apprehend all who speak or preach in favour of the Pope's authority. To have substantial persons in every good town to discover all who speak or preach thus. To have the Act of Succession openly proclaimed, that the people may not make themselves ignorant thereof; whosoever shall offend to be ordered according to the same statute. The beacons throughout the realm to be repaired. Letters to be written to persons having fortresses near the coast, to see them ordered and artillery and munitions put in readiness and cleansed. The Master of the Ordnance to be warned to see all the ordnance and munitions put in order. To call upon Wm. Gonston, Spert and others having charge of the King's ships to have them repaired. To send for my Lord Chancellor to-morrow and for my Lord of Wiltshire. To appoint preachers throughout the realm to preach the gospel and the true word of God. . . . A deputy to be sent into Ireland with all speed to set a stay there. Letters to be sent to the officers in Wales to have regard to those parts, and gentlemen and yeomen to be appointed to apprehend any Papists who preach, etc., to the advancement of the Bishop of Rome. The Scotch ambassadors to be put off till Tuesday. General musters to be made throughout the realm, if it is the King's pleasure."

The impression left by this document is one of furious, yet ordered haste, in the face of a danger so vast and so imminent as to demand the instant calling forth of all the energies and resources of the nation. It reminds us of the preparations made by Napoleon to grapple with the problem of the Hundred Days. Orders like these are only issued on the eve of what is expected to be a struggle of life or death, and it was for this that Henry and Cromwell prepared themselves. One thing at least was certain. The system of terror by which the magnates had already been subdued, could not be allowed to fall into disuse in

face of this greater peril. Rome had her garrisons established all over England in the shape of the monasteries. The clergy had been accustomed to look to the Pope as the head of the Church, and the unheard-of crime of cutting England loose from orthodox Christianity, of openly setting at naught the authority ordained by Christ, might strike the most lukewarm of priests with horror. One preacher had even dared rebuke the King publicly to his face, and such easy subjects of inspiration as the Nun of Kent might at any time fan a spark of discontent into the flame of rebellion.

Under these circumstances the King had to choose between ignominious surrender, or going on as with a forlorn hope, and striking down any thing or any one who might possibly stand in his way. An army in the field has not time to think of the innocent lives and private property that may be sacrificed to its victory, and this was Henry's case. Humane men of all ages will drop a tear over the fate of Sir Thomas More, even though he is no more to be pitied than any other good man, who finds in death the climax and appropriate close of his career. His story is as tragic as that of Zola's little boy, who lay in a fever while his mother was killed, and the house was set on fire by the Prussian shells. War, as General Sheridan truly said, is hell, and the childbirth of a new era is often a hell too. England was in peril, and against her safety, the virtue and learning of her noblest sons count not at all in the balance.

The issue was simple. It was necessary that the King should command the undivided fealty of the nation, and that at a time when the Pope was moving Europe to the destruction of England, subjects of Henry must be either King's men or dead men. This was a question on which there could be no compromise, and there could be no more question of refusal, than of a soldier in an army trying to qualify his allegiance. A form of oath was drawn up

which made it definite that Englishmen were to acknowledge none but an English authority for their governance in Church and State. This oath was put to More and Fisher, of whom More tried to evade it by some ingenuous dialectic, and Fisher refused it outright. Both men believed in their soul and conscience that the Pope was the true head of the Church, and both men honourably and firmly gave their lives for that belief. But the courage displayed by Henry in sending them to their death was equal to their own. It was an intimation to all Europe that the King was in deadly earnest about his pretensions, and that he had cut off his last hope of retreat. It was an intimation to every Englishman that he must either dethrone the King, or obey him unconditionally, and that neither power, nor saintliness, nor the sympathy of the whole Christian world would delay the fall of the axe for a moment. Henry had considered himself explicitly challenged when the Pope tried to make a Cardinal out of Fisher, a prisoner in the Tower. With a sombre magnificence he declared that the Bishop might wear the red hat upon his shoulders, and before it could reach him, the old man paid the penalty of his divided allegiance.

The case of More is the more tragic of the two, for he naturally excites our admiration as well as our sympathy. About some of his suggestions there is a glow of divination, which seems to anticipate doctrines that came into vogue centuries later. Some of the hints of his "Utopia" stamp him as the father of social reformers in the modern sense of the term, and in particular, his suggestions about hospitals and sanitation. However much he may have been indebted to Plato and the schoolmen, he had at least grasped the conception of a community in which the State should take in hand, not only the more obvious duties of sovereignty, but the ordering of social life upon a democratic basis. The regulation of labour and the

institution of a six hours' day go beyond the proposals even of our own Socialists. But the "Utopia" is a dream within a dream. The good Sir Thomas was struck to the heart by the misery and heartlessness of social life as he knew it, and it relieved him to imagine a community where everything should be the direct opposite of the reality which saddened him. That he ever thought the realization of his dream could be a matter of practical politics, there is no evidence. When he became Chancellor, he took no steps in the direction indicated by his writings, and contented himself with a vain effort to preserve the *status quo* in a time of necessary transition.

The policy of the country had too long been in the hands of churchmen, and even in that lukewarm age it was impossible that such men could give their undivided service to one master. Wolsey, at once Cardinal and Chancellor, had been hampered in his policy by the hope, which he always entertained, of harmonizing English with papal interests. He had aspired to use the French alliance as a means of making Henry, and not Charles, the champion of Christendom; and it is hardly conceivable that any circumstances could have induced him to emulate the arch-heretic, Luther, in defying the Pope altogether, and flinging his bulls into the fire in England's name. More was the last of a line of good men who tried to serve two masters. The supremacy of the King he could not and would not allow. Indeed More's patriotism seems to have been a plant of the most stunted growth. The impression that we get from the "Utopia" is that he regarded his country as Kakotopia, a hell on earth, a thing to be endured rather than loved. In his English treatise of "Comfort against Tribulation," he makes this plain. He is speaking about captivity, and he counsels the sufferer to remember that if he frets about being no longer in his own country, he must remember that to talk of any place as one's own country is a fallacy. "We

have here no city nor dwelling country at all; we seek one that we shall come to. And in what country soever we walk in this world, we are but as pilgrims and wayfaring men. And if I should take any country for mine own, it must be the country to which I come, and not the country from which I came."

Such language is that of soberness and honesty, but for this very reason it shows that the man who used it had scarcely the faintest sense of the obligations he owed to the land of his birth. What was to be done with More? He was too formidable a person to be treated with contempt. Of the temper of the English champions of Catholicism, and of the results of leniency towards them, we may judge by the case of Reginald Pole. Like More, he was one of the most cultured scholars of his time, and unlike More, he actually made fervent protestation of his love for England. This love expressed itself in a strange way. Henry had first tried to bribe him into loyalty with the Archbishopric of York, and then had allowed him to go free to the Continent. Pole took advantage of this liberty to publish a book, which shows to what infamy the love of Rome could drive an honourable man.

The book is an impassioned appeal for all English subjects to rebel, and for all foreign powers to invade England. The old medieval doctrine of Hildebrand and Becket is resuscitated, to the effect that the priests, who look after spiritual interests, are superior to kings, who are the guardians of no spiritual thing. The priests are as gods, the King is only their servant. Upon such premises as these it is too easy to raise a superstructure of treason, and Pole is resolved to stick at nothing. Every conceivable term of abuse is heaped upon the head of the unfortunate Henry, and all the half-stifled murmurs of disloyal subjects are condensed into one thunder of denunciation.

The book, or pamphlet, displays an ingenuity positively

fiendish, in devising the ruin of the country its author professed to love. An appeal is made to the Emperor to leave off fighting even the Turk, and plunge his sword into England's bosom. Francis is exhorted to sink his differences with Charles, and join in the holy work of invasion. Language is even used in order to inflame the Spanish soldiers, who had already taken part in the sack of Rome, and who were shortly to make the name of Alva stink in the nostrils of humanity, to show their prowess not upon the sands of Africa or the plains of Piedmont, but amid the fields and villages of England. It seems but a little thing after this, that Pole deliberately appealed, and with the object of making his appeal heard, to the thousands of dissatisfied English subjects, to join with French and Spanish invaders in the work of dethroning their sovereign, and fixing the yoke of the priests, or gods, the yoke of a petty Italian tyrant, upon their necks and their King's neck for ever. "I call to witness that love of my country which is engrafted in me by nature—that love of the Church which is given to me by the Son of God. . . ." Alas! no man, were he ever so honest, can serve two masters.

Such was the language of one who excelled in learning and virtue, and yet was unable to reconcile his conscience with his country. Is there any reason to believe that Sir Thomas More, if he had been on the Continent instead of in the Tower, would have taken a different view of the situation, or that he would have been any more loyal because he differed from Pole in professing to have no country at all? The influence of Pole was troublesome enough, for he travelled about the Continent doing everything he could to harm England, but what if to Pole's influence had been added that of the most eloquent and persuasive man in Europe? And supposing More had been allowed to dwell scatheless in the Tower. Would it not have been an admission that the Crown which hanged

and quartered lesser men, was afraid of proceeding to extremities against the greatest? Would not the fact that the oath of allegiance was evaded, through royal connivance, by More and Fisher, have encouraged others in evasion? Would not their names have been the watchword of every rebellion, and their rescue the object of every London mob? And might they not have found means directly or by implication to encourage resistance? Fisher, as we now know, did actually stoop to intrigues with the foreigner, and for his own harmlessness, as for More's, there was no security but his oath or his death.

It is to be hoped that our account of the motives which guided the actors during the crisis, will not be interpreted into a moral eulogy of Henry VIII, still less into an indiscriminate attack on the characters of his victims. There is, in truth, little that is admirable about the King's character except his courage and ability. The times, we have seen, called for such a man, and there is much in common between him and William the Conqueror. The nation was not fit for a hero like Oliver Cromwell or Nelson, and if it had got such a one it would not have followed him. A vulgar desire of conquest for its own sake went along with grovelling materialism. The spirit of obedience, of sacrifice for a cause, was only seen in the case of a few martyrs, and England is remarkable for the facility with which the greater part of the people were ready to slip from one faith to another at the bidding of the Government. Some part of the country was always ripe for revolt, and the main grievance was usually something that touched the pocket. To unite and persevere in the pursuit of any noble ideal seemed a feat of which Englishmen were incapable. But strength they could and did appreciate. Theirs was the untamed violence of imperfect civilization, but not the effeminate softness we call decadence. They wanted drill, and from a sergeant who should teach them to wheel and manœuvre as one man at the word of com-

mand, or go to instant death by drumhead court-martial in case of disobedience; they were surrounded by enemies, annihilation stared them in the face. What wonder if the sergeant had but little consideration for the feelings of one or two gentler or more cultured than the rest, whose hearts were not in the service, and who cooled the allegiance of others! Their case was a sad one in all conscience, but, right or wrong, such is the way of war, and the way of the grim sergeants who have to make armies out of mobs.

Our task is to record the growth of one love, and not to write a history of England, and we need not pursue with any minuteness the subsequent political events of Henry VIII's reign. The policy of the "Terror" proved not only successful, but even merciful. The execution of More and Fisher had created such a fear of Henry's name, that opposition was effectively silenced, and Cromwell and his master were able to go on with the delicate and dangerous task of suppressing the monasteries, with temporary impunity. When, three years later, what everybody had foreseen came to pass, and half of England was in rebellion, the hopes and efforts of that strange patriot, Reginald Pole, were frustrated, and Henry was able to cope with his northern subjects, without the additional complication of a Spanish or French invasion. As it was, it needed all his skill and all his firmness to master the situation, but master it he did, and henceforth he was able to secure at least the allegiance of his own realm. It is a sign of his popularity that, even when they were in arms against him, the rebels still professed their loyalty to a King who, they thought, had been led astray by a wicked minister.

One proof of Henry's sympathy with his people is the fact that in spite of his quarrel with Rome, he never allowed himself to become the tool of the Protestant Reformation. It was upon this rock that the genius of

Cromwell split. At what seemed the height of his power, when he had just been made Earl of Essex, Cromwell and the Duke of Norfolk, the representatives of the old and the new theologies, were in tacit but deadly antagonism. At last the Duke, belike with that sleek vulpine smile of his, rose at the Council to arrest his rival for high treason. Henceforth there could be no doubt as to Henry's attitude; the Defender of the Faith was its defender still, and the terror, which had struck down the Pope's upholders, was put in motion against his heretics. Not, however, with the merciless severity of the acts themselves, for Henry's principle was always to make a few striking examples and let the rest go.

The Protestant cause does not seem to have made such headway during Henry's reign as we might have expected from the previous vogue of Lollardy. It was enough for most Englishmen that the Bishop of Rome should have no authority in the Church of England, without introducing new-fangled notions out of Germany. It was inevitable, however, that the revolt from Rome would go beyond the denial of the Pope's authority. Whether we approve of it or no, we cannot deny the grandeur and complex thoroughness of the Catholic organization. It had been the product of ages of struggle with Imperial Rome, with heresy, with triumphant barbarism, with feudal tyranny. Not only were its servants organized and their functions assigned with a nicety equalled by no army and no state in history, but the individual life of every Christian man was subjected to a discipline equally minute. The elaborate machinery of fasting, penance, and confession was part of a cunningly devised system for training the soul, in the same way as we train a recruit in the army. Not only was this training searching and severe, but so elastic as to embrace every variety of temperament. Those who, like the blessed Angela of Foligno and St. John of the Cross, were capable

of rising to the highest spiritual levels, could find in every ceremony an esoteric significance; those who, like the poor peasants of many a modern Catholic district, were possessed of simple and literal minds, and who looked upon the saints and our Lord Himself as beings not very different from themselves, were able to take on at least the externals of Christianity, and to put some salutary check upon their sinful impulses.

The Church's system was born of warlike conditions, and it is therefore framed upon principles essentially military. It is for this reason that the element of compulsion enters into it so largely. The priest, we must remember, had to deal not only with the elect and initiated, but with the dull and the slothful and the rebellious, in fact, with every sort and grade of sinner. Some of these stubborn hearts were insensitive to persuasion, and it was only by a merciful sternness that they could be brought into the fold. Besides, the thorns could not be allowed to choke the good seed. It was the idea of the Church to expose each heart, according to its capacity, to a particular kind of influence, and the heretic and backslider ought not to counteract this good work at will, and to ply with all the wiles of Satan God's poor children who scarcely knew their right hand from their left.

Now the central doctrine of the Reformation is subversive of all this. The whole machinery of discipline and priestcraft is shattered at a blow, and the soul is left face to face with God, and with God alone. Instead of treating the majority of His people as if they were children, every member of the Christian community is raised to the dignity of an initiate. Salvation was regarded by Rome as a thing only to be obtained by unremitting and obedient toil, and with the practical bent for which she has always been distinguished, the Church was not satisfied with mere emotion, but insisted that

faith should express itself in continual good works. To the Protestant, on the other hand, Salvation was a state which a man either had or had not attained. His good works counted for nothing in the sight of God, and only by throwing himself, in blind trust, upon the mercy of an infinite Being, could he be quit of his burden of sin. It will be seen that whereas the Roman Catholics may be called the Tories of religion, the nature of Protestantism is essentially Radical.

As in politics so in religion, the leaders of the Revolution comprised every shade of opinion, and to continue our political analogy, we may call Luther a religious Whig, and Calvin an uncompromising Radical, whereas the propaganda of John of Leyden answers, literally, to the proposals of the most " advanced " modern thinkers. One thing was certain, however unpalatable it might be to Conservative reformers. Once the organization of the Church militant was smashed to pieces, once the commander-in-chief, the headquarters staff and the permanent garrisons were removed, it was hopeless to expect that any one could preserve intact the system of doctrine and discipline for which they stood. Blunt Luther might write upon the table at the Wartburg his " Hoc est corpus meum," and Henry VIII, who in obstinacy and coarseness had something in common with the opponent of his youth, might attempt to stem the tide with his Six Articles, but they had both unloosed forces beyond their control, and the path was already clear to Naseby.

The events that succeeded Henry's death show this tendency in conflict with the conservative nature of the English people. We need not trace in detail the history of the two violent oscillations, each coincident with one short reign, which preceded the Elizabethan settlement. As soon as the powerful influence of Henry VIII was withdrawn, the balance shifted definitely in favour of the Reformers; the Six Articles were repealed, and fanatics

of the most extreme Continental schools made their home in England, prompted by much the same motives as impel modern anarchists to the enjoyment of her too indifferent hospitality. From the patriot's point of view, the change was, on the whole, for good. The more prominent of the Anglican Reformers had transferred their allegiance whole-heartedly from a Roman Bishop to an English King, and the national impetus of the revolt could not fail to make them identify the cause of their country with that of the supreme head of the English Church and nation.

There was written, during the latter days of Henry VIII, a treatise which is in every way the counterpart of that of the traitor Reginald Pole. It was composed by one Thomas Becon, whose name was as much honoured in his own day as it is neglected in ours. Perhaps this is due to the fact that though he was one of the first to be imprisoned under Mary, he escaped martyrdom, owing, it is said, to a mistake of Gardiner's. He is, however, fully entitled to rank among the Fathers of the English Church, for he was the friend of Latimer and chaplain to Cranmer, and his works fill three volumes of the English Reformer's Library. The title of this pamphlet is "The Policy of War," and it is addressed to Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet, and one of Henry's most active agents. The opening words of the preface are sufficiently memorable for quotation:

"I think there is no man so far enstranged from civil humanity, which knoweth not how much every one of us is indebted to his native country. For albeit the duty that we owe to our parents, kinsfolk, friends, etc., be great even by the very law and instinct of nature, yet the debt, wherewith we are obliged and bound to our country, seemeth to be greater and of much more valour than we may at any time be able to set ourselves frank and free from it. Our parents only give us this gross,

rude and mortal body. Our country doth not only receive and joyfully sustentate it, but also most opulently adorn and garnish both that and the mind with most goodly and godly virtues."

And again, after one or two paragraphs in the same strain :

" The love of our country must needs be great, seeing the grave, prudent, sage, and wise governors of the public weal heretofore in all their acts sought nothing so much as the prosperity and wealth thereof."

The examples of the great patriots of old are enumerated, and Becon goes on to draw the moral that the duty which these worthies performed is no less incumbent upon Englishmen. " It doeth me good," he cries, " yea, it maketh me seriously to rejoice even at my very heart to see how glad my countrymen are to serve the commodities of thismy country—England."

Such is the opening of a remarkable treatise, which is not only the first in which we find the theory of patriotism definitely laid down and discussed, but which is also an important contribution to political philosophy. In this we must not be deceived by the quaint and sometimes conventional nature of Becon's phraseology. Truth is not altered because it is expressed in the language of the Old Testament, instead of the confused cacophony of the modern expert. Becon's view of war is curiously like, yet significantly different from that of More. Becon admits the miserable state of the world, without qualifying his love for his own portion of it; he deplores the necessity of war, but once embarked on it he would treat it not as " a thing very beastly," but one calling for sanctification by the highest exercise of the Christian virtues. His conception of patriotism represents the highest standpoint to which any Englishman had attained up to his time. His love of England, as passionate as that of a man for a maid, is purified by his sense that

England must be not only loved, but lovable, that nations are subject to some higher law than that of dragons tearing each other in their slime. Nations, like men, are God's creatures and God's ministers, and in the long run their destinies are determined by their conformity with His will. They should therefore throw aside the pride of wealth and conquest, and work out their salvation, like the elect, with fear and trembling. Such is the sense of Becon's political doctrine.

The absolute dependence on God which Becon enjoins is, however, no excuse for neglecting to keep our powder dry. "Is no provision to be made for the conservation of the Christian public weal, but let all things run at havoc, as careless swine, chance what chance will? God forbid! we may not attempt God by any means"—and this leads him to a eulogy of King Henry for the way in which he has fulfilled his duty as a patriot king. "What kingdom in the world is to be compared unto this our English Empire? How hath our most puissant and redoubted King fortressed this his most flourishing monarchy, empire, and kingdom with all things any man can invent for the prosperous conservation of a commonweal! Never was there prince that took like pains for the safety of his commonalty. Never was there father that so greatly watched for the health of a son as he doth for ours." Indeed, the King might justly claim the title "father of his country," since he could apply to her the boast of Augustus, and say: "I took England made of tiles, but I leave it of marble."

There is a ring of true metal about this which is very different from the flattery of the courtier; but even if we are to adopt the most unreasonable view about Becon's sincerity, it at least shows what was his ideal of kingship. He goes on to deal with the nation itself, and how it may ensure the victory over its enemies. "To obtain therefore His (God's) favour," says Becon, ". . . the only

and most next way is to redress our naughty manners." To adopt a phrase that has become a catchword among certain Protestant communities, what we have to do is to get ourselves, as a nation, right with God. His advice for those who go forth to fight her battles is that of Oliver Cromwell: that they shall order themselves in a godly and temperate manner, and abstain from every sort of wickedness. In this respect they might take example even from the heathen, who at least go to war with due solemnity and reverence to the gods, whereas Christian soldiers practise every form of vice—from dicing to murder. The patriotic motive is ever to the fore, as in Becon's reflection upon looting: "How little respect have they unto the conservation and defence of their native country, so that their packs may be well enforced, laden and stuffed." The soldiers for whom Becon longed were, within less than a century of his death, to overthrow the monarchy of which he was so proud!

The "Policy of War" does not confine itself to military matters. Its author is wise enough to see that a nation's ability to win is determined, in the last resort, not only by its military but by its social fitness. "The strongest bulwark and most invincible fortress that can be made for the safeguard of the country, is to live well." Character and not institutions forms the basis of Becon's polity. The greatness of a state is determined by the conscientiousness with which its every member applies himself to his particular function. Becon is far from satisfied with the way that these functions are carried out in his own country; magistrates neglect the public weal; lawyers prefer fees to justice; merchants take advantage of their customers and sell shoddy; gentlemen neglect the duties of their estate to live in luxury, and disgrace themselves by grabbing land; speculators plot to raise the price of wheat; immorality is winked at and the state of honourable wedlock brought into contempt.

These are the things that ruin a nation, and had Becon lived nowadays he might have described them as symptoms of degeneration. As it was, he was content to treat them as ungodliness and sin, provoking God's wrath against England unless she repented in time.

"O England, England, my own native country, for whose wealth and prosperity I do not only shed my prayers, but also salt tears, continually to the Lord our God, and am ready, at every hour willingly to sustain any burden that can be laid on my shoulders for thy safeguard! Would God, would God thou wast not partaker of these grievous enormities and wicked sins which I have now rehearsed! Would God thou didst not abuse the most precious benefits wherewith thou art endued from above before all other nations! . . . Would God thou wast not an unjust taker away of other men's goods! Would God thou didst not thirst after the shedding of innocent blood! Would God thou wast not ready to bear false witness against thy neighbours! . . . To be short, would God thou wast not a manifest transgressor and open offender of God's most holy law, that thou mightest be free from the vengeance and plagues of God that are like to fall upon thee if thou dost not repent and amend thy sinful living!"

It was in strains like these that the passionate lover of his country felt constrained to address her during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The note of confidence and joy is but faintly heard, though it is the habit of some historians to talk vaguely of a revival of national pride under Henry VIII. Where the confident note had been heard, as in Skelton, it did not ring true. Men like Becon could love England dearly, but it was with salt tears over her sins. The cry was not to rejoice, but to repent. There was little indeed to give cause for rejoicing during these anxious years. Henry's skill and the rivalries of his enemies had kept ruin at arm's length,

but there were no striking victories like Agincourt and the Armada. The attempted French invasion when it did come was a bungling and tedious affair; nor was its repulse particularly glorious to our arms. The nation required more drilling before she could become fit for victory, and she had yet to pass through the ordeal of the fire.

It is perhaps in tacit response to this need that we find in this pamphlet of Becon's, and in the works of most other leaders of the Reformation, a political theory essentially Tory long before the word was coined. It had been no wish of Henry VIII nor of any prominent Englishman of his day to go the whole length of the Protestant theory, nor to abolish the system of discipline that the Popes of Rome had set up. Rather was it Henry's idea to take over the papal power, so far as it applied to England, entirely into his own hands, and to occupy the same position in the Church as he did in the State. For such an office he might well deem himself fitted, for he was an eager and not contemptible theologian, and he was not above entering into controversy with some unfortunate heretic, and thus combining the functions of plaintiff and judge. He and Cranmer were the two chief agents in bringing about the compromise known as the Church of England. The object of this arrangement was to set up a system of discipline of which the King, instead of the Pope, should be the head, and above all to see that the Reformation did not get out of hand, and lead to the subversion of all discipline whatever. Much more of the old system had to be abandoned than Henry himself had contemplated, but within a few years of his death, the compromise did get settled in its main outlines, an unsatisfactory and illogical patchwork, but serviceable enough for practical purposes. The Reformers at least succeeded in preserving the Tory or military nature of Roman Catholicism. The severe discipline of the monastic orders was lost; the

minuteness, and what we may justly describe as the science of the old system could not be imparted to the new, but the bishops retained, under the King, a large measure of their powers, and the element of democracy was rigidly excluded from Church government.

Now the Church and State, united under the same head, were naturally bound together by the same theory of government. There was the need for centralization and discipline, engendered by long years of strife at home and peril abroad, and before Englishmen could becom fit for the enjoyment of their rights, it was necessar that they should learn to perform their duties. Not tha their liberties were abolished, for they were merely i abeyance, and even Henry's Parliaments were no always tractable, whereas those of Edward VI did no hesitate, relying no doubt on the sympathy of the Counci to reject proposals emanating from the King himsel But for all that, the idea of liberty is seldom to the fore in political theory. We have all learnt in our youth our duty to our neighbour, formulated under the auspices of Cranmer and Ridley, and enjoining submission, loyalty, and obedience as the first duty of a Christian. He is to honour and obey the King, and all that are set in authority under him; to order himself lowly and reverently to all his betters; to submit himself to all governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters, and to do his duty in that state of life to which it shall please God to call him.

This, it will be observed, was the ideal upheld by Becon in his pamphlet. Society presented itself to these men as a hierarchy of classes, each with its appointed functions, and each member of it finding his salvation in loyally carrying out his particular duty. That the hierarchy was to be rigidly exclusive cannot have been the intention of one who honoured Wolsey and Cromwell, and it will be noticed that the Catechism talks of the state of life to which it *shall* please God to call me; but

the ambition to rise from class to class was not encouraged, and it was more important for a man to do his duty with the one talent, than to clamour for the use of ten.

Some such ideal was certainly in the mind of Henry VIII, and appears in those masterful and characteristic official documents of which he was so prolific. His answer to the Lincolnshire rebels has the ring of sincerity. "I have never heard that Prince's councellors and prelates should be appointed by rude and ignorant common people. How presumptuous, then, are ye, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, to take upon you, contrary to God's law and men's law, to rule your prince whom ye are bound to obey and serve, and for no worldly cause to withstand? . . . Wherefore, sirs, remember your follies and traitorous demeanour, and shame not your native country of England." This language is not that of an Oriental despot trying to cow his slaves, but that of a popular king, who prided himself upon his "bluffness," addressing his subjects upon ground that was common to both parties. What a king's functions were supposed to be is set forth in the intended proclamation of Lancaster Herald, a few days later: "The King's majesty which hath chief charge both of your souls and bodies, exhorteth you in Christ as a pitiful shepherd over his sheep."

This is an accurate statement of Henry's position. There was no department of life over which the discipline of the State might not be extended, and for practical purposes the state was the King. The very dress that Englishmen wore, the very food they ate, was the subject of minute supervision. We find Latimer writing from his diocese of Worcester to crave the King's indulgence, during Lent, in the matter of white meat. With certain important qualifications, Parliament allowed royal proclamations to have the force of law. Hence we need find nothing either unctuous or extraordinary in Henry's last

speech in Parliament, in which he exhorts his subjects to a greater exercise of Christian charity, and bids them "heal their divisions, or else I, whom God has appointed as His vicar and high minister here, will see these divisions extinct."

One of the most elaborate statements of this theory emanates from the pen of poor young Edward VI, who sets it down in an essay that suggests the painstaking schoolboy at least as much as the king. Its very quaintness and *naïveté* enhance its value, for Edward's mind is evidently a blank page which takes faithful impressions from the spirit of its time. The essay deals minutely with every class of the community, how they all, from noblemen to artisans, neglect their duties, and what legal steps it is necessary to take to reclaim them. In more powerful and homely phrase, the same idea is set forth in the sermons of that most attractive of all the Reformers, honest Hugh Latimer. He was a man of the people if ever there was one, he sprang from their ranks and talked their language, and was never afraid of denouncing those in high places, nobles and bishops and judges, who forgot their duties and oppressed the poor. But as to the duty of obedience, he allowed no compromise. Our rulers are appointed of God, and even if they neglect their duties, it is no excuse for neglecting ours. "Some will say, 'Our curate is naught, an ass-head, a dodipole, a lack-Latin, and can do nothing. Shall I pay him my tithes, that hath done us no good, nor none will do?' Yea, I say, thou must pay him his duty, and if he be such a one, complain to the Bishop. 'We have complained to the ordinary, and he is as negligent as he.' Complain to the Council. 'Sir, so have we done, but no remedy can be had.' Well, I will tell thee where thou shalt complain; complain to God, He will surely hear thee, He will remedy it." Even with regard to taxation, Latimer's doctrine does not admit of resistance. The King "must have as much as is

necessary for him . . . and that must not thou, or I, that are subjects, appoint, the King himself must appoint it."

Such then is the conception of the state that emerges from the turmoil of the Reformation. Whatever may be its merits in the abstract it was eminently fitted for England as she was then. A country as yet imperfectly united and passing through a critical period of transition, a country whose leading men were too often traitors, and where it was scarcely possible to collect a tax without a rebellion, a country threatened by a League of Christendom, was bound, at any cost, to get herself efficiently governed and disciplined. There could be no question of the sovereignty of the people while the people was not sufficiently united to have a will of its own. Before men can enter even into the Kingdom of England, they have in a sense to be born again, to acquire a habit of thought and a willingness for sacrifice, that can only be engendered in the course of many years. No child has been able to assume the privileges of manhood without some preliminary breaking in, and the Tudors were hard schoolmasters. Their House was not to pass away before the darkness of probation had vanished in the morning glow of victory, before the Almighty blew with his winds and scattered at once the clouds that had darkened over England, and the proud galleons which threatened her with a real, because an un-English slavery.

One aspect of our Reformation has yet to be considered, one that will, in the opinion of many, have to be written down as a misfortune. The Tory ideal of the sixteenth century was no new thing, but a confirmation and strengthening of an idea already implicit in the vision of Piers Plowman, and many another treatise of the Middle Ages. But the democracy, by which it was qualified, had received an irreparable blow. It was the idea of the Catholic Church, as it had been of primitive Christianity,

that all men are equal in the sight of God. Her position as a world power made it easier for her to be no respecter of persons, and her struggle against simony and secular control, in so far as it was successful, enabled her to fulfil her democratic functions. It is true that her organization was one of rigid subordination, but it was a service where every private carried a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack, where a peasant might rise to the Papacy, where a rich young man like St. Francis could take Poverty for his bride, and where humility was the high road to canonization. The subordination was only an official one; as God's minister, the Pope might depose an Emperor, as a man he was the servant of the humblest slave. Thomas à Becket loved and insisted upon the pomp of ceremony, but beneath his gorgeous robes was the sackcloth of affliction, and beneath that crawled the vermin. This ideal of the Church was, of course, never realized in its perfection, except by individuals, but so far did it prevail that such unrestrained comradeship as that of Chaucer's pilgrims was nothing out of the common.

The Anglican Church retained a system of discipline less thorough, though modelled after the Roman pattern; its recognized head was not a remote spiritual potentate, but the King of England. In other words, the fountains of temporal and spiritual honour were the same. This had tended to be the case long before the step was formally taken, but now that the royal supremacy was made the keystone of the whole system, it was inevitable that the ideals of the State should tinge those of the Church. The destruction of the monasteries, though again we must remember that they had become less and less fitted for the discharge of their functions, was a step in the same direction. When the patronage and government of the State are mainly aristocratic, it is hard for a State Church to be the engine of democracy.

Had the English Church gone the whole length of the Reformation, she might have been at least as democratic as before; the armies of Oliver Cromwell and General Booth cannot be cited as strongholds of class privilege. But the compromise on which she based herself, damped the Tory democracy of Rome, and stopped short of the Radicalism of Geneva. Her parsons bore little resemblance to him of the "Canterbury Tales," who lectured rich and poor indifferently upon their sins, and the landowner came to occupy a position in respect to the parson similar to that of the King in relation to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The saying "No bishop, no king," might have been reinforced by "No parson, no squire," and the system of local government by the landed gentry, which the subsequent reigns were to see consolidated, owed not a little of its stability to the support of the Church.

The Church had suffered another fatal blow to her independence in the dissolution of the monasteries. This unlovely episode in our history has been allowed to become a bone of theological and social contention, with the result that the true aspect of the case has been obscured by sentimental and partisan special-pleading. It is certainly ridiculous to talk of the monasteries as if they were so many oases of godliness and charity in a wilderness of oppression. On the contrary, we have the best reason for believing that, like most corporations, they were inclined to be rather worse landlords than the ordinary squire. So far back as the peasants' revolt, the monks had been singled out for special and drastic treatment. Again, the ardour of their religious sentiment is more than doubtful. The atmosphere of the time had long been unfavourable to it, though we have an isolated and beautiful instance to the contrary in the case of the Carthusians. Even if we do not accept for gospel all the statements of Henry's commissioners, their detailed and unpublishable reports afford sufficient evidence of

what we might naturally expect from such institutions in an age of infidelity.

Ever since her temporal triumph under the Lancastrians, the Church in England had been going the way of the Church all over Europe. The Renaissance Popes had well-nigh abandoned the pretence of religion; they included such shining examples as Sixtus the treacherous, Alexander the poisoner, Julius the fighter, and Leo the worldly. The spirit of the Renaissance was abroad, and men had more care to write good Latin than to lead good lives. The utter collapse of the Church at the first assault shows how fatally weakened had been the invisible and spiritual power of a Becket or an Innocent III. And only one result could be expected from large and often wealthy communities of persons vowed to celibacy, and unsustained by any divine fire.

It might have been possible to have turned the suppression of the monasteries to untold good. For there are two sorts of property in a nation; that which is held by, and for the benefit of individuals, and that which is held by public bodies for the benefit of the community. The well-being of society, as far as this can be compassed by material means, consists in the due balance of these two, for on one side lies the tyranny of the few, and on the other the worse tyranny of the majority. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, a more satisfactory balance was obtained between what Coleridge would have called the propriety and the commonalty than at any other period of our history. The "commonalty" was very large, and took a variety of forms. There was first of all the central power, whose duty it was to retain intact, despite the Lancastrian eclipse, the great machine of law and government, which had been bequeathed by Henry of Anjou. Then there was the Church, whose function, however inadequately she might perform it in practice, was to enter into a more tender and minute relation with her

flock, to make provision for the poor and defenceless, and to do what was needed in the way of training the mind. Then, to descend from the national to the local community, there were the common lands of the villagers, and the common property of the gild brethren.

The dissolution of the monasteries had the effect of giving a fatal tilt to this social balance. At an already critical time of transition, not far short of a quarter of the whole demesne land, as distinguished from the common land, passed from the hands of ecclesiastical corporations, bodies which at least owned some public responsibilities, into those of individuals. It would have been conceivable, and it was suggested at the time, that the Crown should have kept the effects of its sacrilege, and taken over the whole of the Church's social functions. But those who rob cannot afford to neglect their accomplices, and Henry was forced to relinquish what he had won. And so, on the one hand, social duties that had been performed inadequately by the Church, ceased to be performed at all, and on the other hand, the power of the big landowners was enormously increased.

One effect of this change was the rise of a new kind of house and a new school of architecture. The big country mansion, as we know it, may be said to date from this time, and is the symbol of a new type of domination, which was eventually to reduce the Crown to a cipher and the peasant to a labourer without land. As befits the dwellings of a class largely consisting of *nouveaux riches*, and owing their prosperity to the plunder of holy things, these dwellings take on an increasing worldliness, which is generally in direct proportion to their size.

The Gothic spirit was not conquered without a prolonged struggle extending over many generations, and especially in the smaller buildings, it contributed not a little to the charm of our country-house architecture. But in the mansions of the great the Renaissance was not

to be denied, and its tendency was everywhere to crush out the free energy of the Gothic. From the very foundations the keynote of the style was its symmetry, and symmetry in the product goes along with slavery in the workman. The delight in creation, the realization of human personality in matter, is incompatible with exact and rigid conformity to pattern. And thus the great symmetrical fronts of so many big houses are ominous of a changing state of society, in which the souls of common men count for less than in the days of Chaucer.

This interpretation is strengthened by the contrast of the big houses with the homes of the peasantry. Whatever may be the case with mansions of the rich, cottage architecture long remains a well of Gothic undefiled, and in the rare cases where the Renaissance style makes any sort of impression, it is in externals. The stone doorways in the West, like those of churches; the free and flowing plaster decoration of the East; the smiling and hospitable half-timber work of Kent, and the stout and austere sufficiency of the northern cottages, all these tell one story of the joy of craftsmanship, of the free play of local character, of the Englishman's deep sense of religion and obstinate pride of tradition. But to-day there is no cottage architecture, save that of a conscious and middle-class revival.

But the commonalty was hit in other ways than by the suppression of the monasteries. Before the Church was touched at all, complaints had been loud of the enclosures of common lands, principally in the midland counties, for the purpose of sheep-farming. It must not be imagined that the peasants of a pastoral were necessarily worse off than those of an agricultural district; on the contrary, we can see with our own eyes that the wool-growing parts, with their fine churches and substantial dwellings, were the most prosperous of all. It was no race of beggars that built the Cotswold villages. But the process of change

was too often a cruel one, and carried out by cruel means. Both the Tudor Henries, as well as the Protector Somerset, made an honest and sustained fight against this evil, and in particular Henry VIII extended his prerogative jurisdiction to include a Court of Requests for the special protection of the poor. But statutes were hard to enforce, nor were the essential features of the problem quite understood. The first attack of the oligarchy was only too successful, and in many districts the more thorough-going enclosers of the eighteenth century found their work done for them.

Towards the middle of the century the condition of the poor was extremely bad. The literature of the time is full of their complaint. When the strong hand of Henry VIII was withdrawn there followed the tragic interlude of the Duke of Somerset, a man who really tried to do his duty, and justify his title of Protector. Then the country passed into the hands of that worst government of all, a committee of nobles who were only united in maintaining the interests of their class against the poor man. It was at this time that what was perhaps the most keenly felt of all the Reformation changes was put into practice. One of the last acts of Henry VIII's Parliament was to put such property of gilds and chantries, as had been devoted to religious purposes, into the King's hands. Henry, for his part, had expressly promised that he would take care that the poor did not suffer—a necessary provision, seeing that the religious and charitable functions of these bodies were hardly distinguishable. Whether he would have kept his word is a question on which we may speculate, but that Edward VI's lords were insensible to such considerations there can be no sort of question. Corrupt, inefficient and quarrelsome oligarchs as they were, they went far towards reproducing the worst features of Henry VI's rule, and their conduct in power is no small justification for the Tudor Henries,

with their Star Chamber and their axe. The Council showed their power, not in putting down the great, but by filling the Norfolk dykes with the blood of three thousand Englishmen, fighting for their rights and their lands, and slaughtered by the professional valour of foreign mercenaries.

There was another influence coming into play, which, to do the Council justice, rendered the social problem they scarcely tried to solve, doubly hard. Industry was becoming more and more based upon capital, and a new class of rich man was coming into existence, the employers of labour on a large scale. One of these early capitalists had been the merchant Canynge of Bristol, with whom readers of Chatterton will be familiar, and who entertained Edward IV with fitting magnificence. Then we have the famous Jack of Newbury, a big clothier, who seems to have owned quite a large factory, and to have conducted it upon model lines. From the earliest Tudor times we hear complaints of the huge sheep-runs and consequent enclosures, which came into existence in response to the increased demand for wool. The whole structure of industrial life was undergoing transformation, and the old gilds, which were hard enough hit by confiscation, were obviously unfitted, with their small masters and limited number of employees, for the new conditions.

How cruel was the lot of the poor may be judged from the evidence of Crowley, whom his modern editor describes as a Puritan of the narrowest school, and who was therefore the last man to be biassed in favour of the old Roman Catholic system. He writes, in his trotting workaday metre, of the abbeys that were suppressed "all by a law," and remarks what an opportunity was here for cherishing the poor and providing for education, now lost for ever. Again he tells of a merchant, who on returning from over the seas, passed by the site of an almshouse, on which was now erected a splendid mansion.

The merchant was naturally surprised at the well-being of a land where even the poor lived in palaces, but he was soon undeceived by some poor fellow who begged him for charity :

" ' Alas, sir,' quoth the poor man,
' We are all turned out,
And lie and die in corners
Here, there and about.
Men of great riches
Have bought our dwelling-place,
And when we crave of them
They turn away their face.' "

In a prose pamphlet, also written during the reign of Edward VI, Crowley deals with these evils in a more systematic way. He shares the horrors of sedition that much experience of it had stamped on the minds of thoughtful Englishmen, and he would treat it as doctors do a dangerous disease, by putting away the causes whereof it grows. And what are the causes of sedition ? Crowley lets the poor man speak for himself : " Cormorants, greedy gulls, yea, men that would eat up men, women and children, are the causes of sedition. They take our houses over our heads, they buy our grounds out of our hands, they raise our rents, they levy great (yea, unreasonable) fines, they enclose our commons. . . . No remedy, therefore, we must needs fight it out, or else be brought to the like slavery that the French men are in." No modern Socialist could have put the case of labour against capital more forcibly.

Yet we must grant that this change, cruel as it was in its workings, was necessary for England's development. The old order of society, with its all-absorbing local interests and its lack of adaptability, was no fit vessel for an exalted patriotism. By causes over which she had no control, England was shortly to be thrown into a position of infinitely greater possibilities than she had dreamed of before. Columbus and Vasco da Gama were working in

her cause though they knew it not, and her destiny would soon point to broader seas than had entered into the dreams of that prophetic pamphleteer who wrote the "Libel" of her policy. All through the change, the Tudor Henries had exercised a minute and unremitting supervision over its every phase. The object of their policy was to turn the blind workings of business into channels that should conduce to the national benefit, for they were wise enough to see that strong realms make strong kings. The question of enclosures was repeatedly taken in hand, with the especial object of keeping a numerous population on the soil to be the backbone of the services; navigation laws were passed to foster our merchant shipping; the eating of fish during Lent was enforced not so much from any religious motive as to encourage fishermen; the very shrouds in which the dead were wrapped were made the subject of regulation; sumptuary laws regulated details of food and dress and tried to keep men in their proper stations; Trinity House was incorporated. Some of these regulations may have been ill-advised, and some unpracticable, but taken all together they tended to unite the nation, because sentiment tends to follow policy—a reason we have noticed before.

We have not space to dwell upon the troubled and bitter periods between the death of Henry VIII and the accession of his second daughter. The Reformation was able to make giant strides during the brief reign of Edward VI, or rather during the reign of his Council, but under such auspices it had little chance of getting any grasp on the nation. Of this the collapse of Northumberland's conspiracy, and the piteous fate of Lady Jane Grey are proof enough. The person who made it for ever impossible that the Bishop of Rome could restore his authority in England, except at the sword's point, was not Henry VIII nor Cranmer, but the Catholic Queen Mary. The five years of her reign taught Englishmen, as no sermons nor

pamphlets could have done, what the papal supremacy meant. This was the darkest hour of all, a darkness lit by no flicker of dawn, but streaked, ever and anon, by ghastly fires of martyrdom. Well might England have cried with Shelley's Prometheus:

> "Torture and solitude,
> Shame and despair—these are my empire."

Yet it would be painting the situation in false colours to talk, like Seeley, as if England had, during Mary's reign, become part of the Hapsburg Empire like the Netherlands. We did not sink as low as that. We were entrapped, through the love and faith of one of the most unhappy women in history, into a shameful and ruinous alliance, that from the first was utterly distasteful to the nation. Philip of Spain might marry our Queen and entangle our foreign policy, but he dared not assume any of the functions of sovereignty, still less land a single Spanish soldier on English soil. It was by the merest accident that he accomplished as much as he did, for with a little more energy on the part of its leader, Wyatt's insurrection must have overturned the throne. When Mary and the arch-traitor Pole, whom she had made archbishop, died on the same day, that evil dream took flight across the seas, and no Alva dared march to London to make it a reality.

# CHAPTER V

## COUNTER-REFORMATION

WE, who are accustomed to associate the name Elizabethan with the most buoyant and glorious years in our history, with Drake and Shakespeare, Spenser and Raleigh, are perhaps not apt enough to discriminate between the prolonged gloom with which the reign opens, and the radiance amid which it draws to a close. The period which we most naturally associate with the great Queen's name, that of the victories and song-books, in fact comprises roughly but the latter half of it, nor is the full glory attained until the supreme danger which threatened us is dashed to pieces, with the hopes of all our enemies, upon the rocks of Ireland. If no joy ever thrilled a nation comparable to that which England proved after this supreme mercy, surely never was depression more hopeless and more excusable than that through which Elizabeth piloted her during the last hour before the dawn.

Let us try for a moment to put out of our minds what we know of the sequel, and view the situation as it must have presented itself to one of our countrymen at the end of the year 1558. To him it must have seemed as if the doom which had threatened England so long was now close at hand, as if the very cries of "God save the Queen!" "Long may she reign!" were but a ghastly irony. Suppose he were to turn his mind's eye upon the

past. Inglorious at the best must our record have seemed since the now almost legendary days of Harry V, a tale of little success abroad and weary dissension at home, culminating in the supreme humiliation of Calais. The reign of Elizabeth's father cannot have inspired much enthusiasm in one from whom the ultimate value of his work was hid. Such sorry triumphs as the Spurs and Boulogne, and even the great victory of Flodden, must have seemed but a poor compensation for the blood of so many of the noblest and best, not to speak of all the poor fellows who had been hanged after the Pilgrimage of Grace. As for the separation from Rome, all that work had been rendered odious by the Northumberlands and Seymours, and had been undone altogether by Mary. Now it had to be done all over again, if that were possible.

Our international position was something more than disquieting. The King of Spain was all the stronger by his freedom from the burden of Germany, and the power of Henry II was not apparently less than that of Francis. The marriage of Mary Queen of Scots with the Dauphin had revived the old Franco-Scottish danger in an acute form, and the fact that Mary was lawful heir and unlawful claimant to the English crown boded ill for the prospects of a heretic Queen, in a country more than half of whose inhabitants still inclined to Mary's religion. The Spanish marriage of the late Queen, shameful and disastrous as it had proved, had at least this to be said for it, that it neutralized the alliance of France and Scotland. Now we were to stand alone, for the alliance of Philip might at any time change to enmity, and there were enough Spanish troops in Flanders, flushed with victory, to make a blow at the heart of England a promising and not improbable move on the part of the Catholic King.

What chance had England of waging a successful war? Henry VIII had left her with a respectable fleet and a fortified coast. The forts still stood with their squat,

round towers intact, but in every other respect national defence had been allowed to go to ruin. The royal navy was meagre in numbers and tonnage. At a time when the importance of money was recognized on all hands as an essential of military strength, England had squandered her treasure, and had been saddled with a debased coinage and a substantial debt. About a year after Elizabeth's accession we find the Count de Feria, Philip's minister, remarking that when she had done all, she should not be able to maintain war above four months. For the very materials of war, such as gunpowder, we were dependent upon other countries.

Even after the experience of Tudor discipline, it did not seem probable that Elizabeth would have a united nation at her back. Her wars would be wars of religion, and except for London and the South-Eastern shires, where the Protestant faith had been literally burnt into the people, the majority was still Catholic. Some of the most powerful families, notably those of Percy, Neville and Howard, had Papists for their heads. The Queen's title was doubtful, and those who sympathized with papal pretensions were not likely to put the claims of a heretic's child before those of an orthodox and legitimate princess. Rebellion had become chronic, and the fate of Lady Jane Grey augured ill for the chances of the Protestant candidate.

Weak, humiliated, impoverished, threatened with destruction from without and from within, what must England's chances have seemed to our imaginary observer of 1558? But let us suppose him capable of looking only for a few years in advance, and his grounds for apprehension become even firmer. For as yet the Protestant religion had, through all its vicissitudes, at least enjoyed the advantage of the offensive. When Luther had gone to Rome he found himself at the headquarters of a power that was, to all appearance, not only corrupt but mori-

bund. No sort of religious enthusiasm was apparent under the auspices of a Medici or Farnese, and it is even said that the priests, as they celebrated mass, used to mutter in irony, "Bread thou art, bread thou wilt remain! Wine thou art, wine thou wilt remain!" The Pope himself, Leo X, had remarked after his election, "Now that we have the Papacy, let us enjoy it!" But those who imagined that the Church, lazy and godless as she had grown, had lost all power of recovery, had reckoned ill with the strength of that tremendous organization. It is a trite saying that in human affairs the form is nothing, the spirit everything, but there may come times when the spirit has died away, but the form lives on to receive and direct and give it power when the revival takes place at last.

It was thus that our constitutional liberties, which had lain dormant under the House of Tudor, revived under their successors and drank life at the fountains of precedent, and it was thus that Catholicism, so far from yielding to the shock of the Reformation, assumed that new lease of power and vitality which we call the Counter Reformation.

To understand the nature and probability of such a revival, we must remember what we have already ascertained about the essence of the Catholic system. The Church had come into existence as a fighting body, and it was towards the strengthening of her militant efficiency that she had forged her armoury of dogma, and her more than Roman discipline. Since the time of her last revival under Hildebrand and Innocent, when she had launched the crusades and broken the power of the Hohenstaufen, she had let her armour grow rusty and her discipline slack. Luther, the great mutineer, had caught her at her weakest and worst, and entered the battle with all the might of holiness and truth, against cynicism and Mammon. The huge, inert mass seemed incapable of

resistance, and allowed province after province to be torn away with hardly a blow. Of the two temporal heads of Catholicism, one did not scruple to invoke the aid of the heathen Turk, while the Emperor himself took twenty-five years to bring his forces into action against the Lutherans, only to meet with ignominious failure when the hour arrived. The Papacy itself had suffered the supreme humiliation at the hands of the imperial troops, and had sunk into a position of seemingly hopeless dependency upon her spoiler. To a devout Catholic it might well seem as if the last hour had come, and the abomination of desolation already stood where it ought not.

About the middle of the century a striking and similar change begins to take place on both sides. The fighting efficiency of both stood in need of strengthening. Luther's system, with its frank acknowledgment of divine right, was well enough fitted to prevail where, as in Saxony, the Prince happened to support it; but in France or the Netherlands, where the whole machinery of government was in motion against it, something more vigorous, more capable of standing by itself, was required. Of several attempts to answer this demand the most promising was that of the Frenchman, John Calvin, who, with the clear-cut logic characteristic of his nation, put the ideas of the Reformation into a form more radical and more dangerous than anything of which Luther had dreamed. It is from Geneva, and not from Wittenberg, that the impulse came which was to tear the Low Countries from Spain, and his kingdom from Charles I. It was because the system of Geneva comes into action before that of Trent that the Catholic cause suffers its heaviest blows just about the time of Elizabeth's accession.

It may seem a paradox to assert that Calvin succeeded in strengthening the will-power of his followers, by denying the very existence of a free will. If the mass of men were perfectly logical, the belief that they were helpless

machines would result in spiritual paralysis. But the doctrine of predestination, or determinism, is one that may be asserted, but has certainly never commanded the complete assent of any human mind, because the notion of one's own will being enslaved is unthinkable. Thus we find modern scientific philosophers stoutly denying free will, and yet talking as if they, the helpless resultants of blind forces, were capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood, and right from wrong, saying in fact, " You are machines that talk and think and act because you cannot help it," and then, in the same breath, " Ye are as gods, knowing good and evil."

Because a will completely unfree is also unthinkable, its upholders have always been fain to stop short at some tacit compromise with the doctrine they oppose. Thus the modern determinist will very likely deny that we ought to blame criminals, but he will emphatically blame the man who does blame criminals, and the government of men that allows its action to be influenced by such motives.

Calvinist predestination is not to be interpreted logically. If this were the case we should have to believe that God, whose judgments are inscrutable, and according to Calvin, not to be judged by human standards, has predestined his helpless creature to eternal joy or eternal torture before birth, and that no amount of human effort can make the least difference as to the result. There would then be no valid answer to what Calvin describes as the " grunt of filthy swine," that if God has arranged everything beforehand, human effort is stultified. Calvin avoids this by vehement abuse and an argument ingenuously circular, which lets us into the real secret of his system. The ungodly man will say that being damned, holiness on his part is simply thrown away. Nay, replies Calvin, the very fact of his living a holy life is evidence of his election, for the end of election is holiness. *Therefore*

he has no excuse for not striving after holiness, and to this extent, at any rate, his will is free. The fallacy of this argument, which mixes cause with effect, and alternately assumes and dispenses with one and the same proposition, will be no less obvious than its practical utility.

What it amounts to is this: Mankind is divided into two rigid and exclusive classes, the saved and the damned. Evidence of salvation is in the breast of every true believer, and in unspeakable gratitude and love he reposes himself upon the mercy of the Giver. It was only natural that those who had received the true doctrine, in other words, the followers of Calvin, should come to number themselves among God's elect. From the militant standpoint, the results were momentous. Here was a body of men, profoundly convinced of their own salvation, moving about in the midst of the damned. In the days of their primitive sincerity, nothing else mattered to them beyond this supremely important fact. Since they had entered into the communion of the elect, since they were predestined for joys to which the sufferings of this world could not be compared, nothing could touch them, and an invincible firmness and confidence was the result. This was balanced by what may fairly be described as the besetting sin of Calvinism, a spiritual pride almost Satanic. They often behaved, logically enough, as if they were a company of angels in the midst of fiends, and the way in which Milton's priggish angels address their opponents is not different from the style in which a Puritan saint would rebuke a sinner. A peculiarly hard and ungenial temperament was found not to be inconsistent with the most austere self-sacrifice, and the popular idea of the lank, snuffling and uncharitable preacher was not devoid of foundation in fact. Calvinists were not slow to take upon themselves some of the unamiable qualities with which they endowed their Deity.

Human charity was too often lacking towards those whom God Himself had presumably reserved for hell fire. A child at Geneva was put to death, under Calvin's auspices, for striking his father, and we find Cromwell writing complacently how, at Drogheda, one of the Cavaliers was heard to cry in his agony from a burning building, "I burn, I burn," with the evident implication that he would have even better cause to do so in another world. Puritanism has an evil connection with the slave trade.

But as a system of discipline, Calvin's was not unworthy to compare with that which he designed to shatter. No inquisitor ever established a more grinding tyranny than did he of Geneva, a tyranny which presumed to regulate and pry into the most intimate affairs of life. It was his influence which produced that strangest of prodigies, an army not only brave, but as godly as any religious brotherhood. Fatalism has often made troops fearless of death, and the half-naked hordes who immolated themselves at Omdurman had some, at least, of the spirit of the Ironsides. The discipline of Geneva, and the courage of predestination, were reinforced by the study of the Jewish scriptures, themselves the product of one of the fiercest warrior nations ever known. To hew down the Amalekites, to smite the ungodly hip and thigh, to bind kings in chains, to emulate the massacres of Joshua, or the treachery of Jael, could claim the sanction of infallible and divine wisdom, which it might be the sin of Saul to call in question.

In another respect Calvinism was peculiarly suited for its work as an instrument of revolution. We have seen that the essence of the Reformation was to substitute a Radical for a Tory system in the religious sphere. But Luther was almost as much of a conservative as Henry VIII himself. Up to the very end of his life he made himself the champion of divine right, and even

compromised his cause by conniving at a very serious scandal on the part of one of his princely supporters, while on the other hand he had publicly recommended the German magnates to cut down their insurgent peasantry without mercy. Towards the end of his life he was forced somewhat to qualify his doctrine to meet the case of Protestant subjects dwelling under Catholic princes, but, heroic fighter as he was himself, his name was associated rather with passive obedience than revolt. Calvin, however, as was his manner, pushed his principles to their extreme conclusion in matters of Church government. As thoroughly as Rome had organized her system from above downwards, did he proceed to work in the opposite and democratic sense. Wherever two or three were gathered together, Christ was in the midst of them. Gorgeous cathedrals and elaborate ceremonial could be dispensed with; if a few poor but elect souls could gather together in a barn or an upper room, they were as directly in communication with Christ as the most exalted of saints. The elders whom they elected were not as priests, endowed with special and mystic authority, but men like themselves, chosen for the convenience of the whole body, and answerable to them. Men did not need other men or their images to stand between them and their Saviour. It is obvious that here was an ideal organization for rebellion against constituted authority. A central control was not needed, every conventicle could stand by itself, every band of the elect needed to be stamped out separately.

It was the appearance of this new and formidable enemy that rendered inevitable some counter move on the part of the Roman Church. Some idea of reform had been in the air even before the advent of Luther, and some there were who imagined that the quickening impulse might come from the classical Renaissance. The name of Erasmus was prominent in this connection, and

many there are even now who find it a matter for regret that the Church did not follow in the path he indicated. Such an event might have appeared at one time by no means improbable, for Erasmus was the spoilt child of the Papacy, and not only was he allowed a freedom of speech denied to others, but there was even talk of giving him a Cardinal's hat. Erasmus was eminently reasonable, and his position approaches close to that of our own "modernists." But from the militant point of view, which was then all-important, his influence was wholly pernicious. The Church was in the field, fighting for her unity, nay, for her existence, against one of the most formidable heresies she had yet encountered. If she wished to survive, or regain her lost ground, she must refurbish and not cast away her weapons. Now Erasmus would have weakened her in the two respects in which it was most vital for her to be strong. He cared little for dogma, and he would have weakened the authority of the priesthood; in other words he would have reversed and stultified the superb fighting organization which it had taken centuries to construct. He did not understand nor sympathize with the Church, because, though a scholar and a man of genius, he was not at heart a Catholic. His unfitness to bear her standard is evinced by his remark that he was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made. Her heroes and even her adversaries were of that stuff.

The Counter-Reformation, when it did come, proceeded in a sense altogether different from that of Erasmus. We are not concerned to defend the shifts and intrigues by which the Council of Trent was pushed to a conclusion. But by fair means or foul the work which that Council had undertaken was efficiently accomplished. The dogma of the Church was not watered nor weakened in any way, but reaffirmed, defined and strengthened. The position of the Pope as the final authority in matters of doctrine was established, and the whole machinery of Catholic

discipline was reorganized. The hero of the Counter-Reformation is not Erasmus, but St. Ignatius Loyola, who was a Spaniard and a soldier, and its most successful and triumphant achievement was the most thorough-going system of spiritual discipline the world has yet seen, that of the Society of Jesus.

The centre of Catholic activity now shifts from Italy to Spain. The Italian cities, with the exception of Venice, which was fighting hard against the Turk for her Eastern possessions, were too obviously degenerate to take the lead in any European contest. With the death of Raphael and the despair of Michelangelo, their art was sinking towards the soullessness of the Bolognese, and the grace of the courtier was more desired than the deep-seated intensity of purpose that fires the greatest art. The Italian Renaissance literature of the sixteenth century impresses us by the lack of real depth underneath its brilliant exterior. The form becomes everything, the matter sinks into insignificance. The cynical culture of Ariosto, who can seldom refrain from a covert sneer at his own heroes, the melancholy sweetness of Tasso, are more calculated to tease us out of thought during idle hours, than to move to high contemplation or noble deeds. What help or unity could be expected from cities which hated each other worse than the foreigner, whose ideals, such as they were, were utterly divergent, which were honey-combed with corruption or submissive to monstrous tyranny, where atheism without the courage of its convictions went forth hand in hand with superstition, where cruelty and vice were carried to a pitch of refinement that a Nero might have envied, and which, before their conquest by the foreigner, had played at war with troops of hired mercenaries too conversant with the rules of the game to do each other serious injury.

Some sort of an Italian revival did indeed take place, for during the latter half of the century we have a suc-

cession of earnest and devout Popes, who, if they were bad friends to beauty, had at least the cause of religion at heart. It was at this time that the kindest and most urbane of holy men was walking the streets of Rome, the blessed St. Philip of Neri, who once said that the children might chop wood on his body if it were not displeasing to God; it was then that a Pope had the bells rung to celebrate St. Bartholomew's massacre. But the most striking manifestations of revived Catholicism came not from Italy, but from Spain. The Peninsula gave evidence of the intensity of her Catholic feeling by an overflow of mystic ecstasy. She produced no less than three of those rare and exalted spirits who have, to a pre-eminent degree, pierced through the forms of religion to its essence, and without discarding dogma, have made even the most abstruse theological propositions glow with a new and awful radiance. We refer to St. Ignatius himself, St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross.

The long struggle with the heathen conquerors had rendered Spain a fighting nation of the most formidable type, and hence peculiarly suited to lead the Counter-Reformation. Everything centred in dog-like devotion to the King. Proud, bigoted, and intensely in earnest, Philip was just the monarch to appeal to the Spanish temperament. Intense personal dignity, and blind loyalty to King and Church, were what served the Spaniard in place of patriotism, and made him seem to his foes something more wicked and more terrible than an ordinary man. Even the splendid army of Alva was little better than a band of *condottieri*. Of the four divisions of that army, when it marched from Italy, not one was Spanish, and in the Netherlands it was in a chronic state of mutiny, the native Spaniards being the worst of all.

Though its motive power was derived from Spain, the Counter-Reformation was, by nature, cosmopolitan. In France, patriotism was at a low ebb, and the Catholic

League did not hesitate to invoke Spanish support against their own countrymen. The Catholic cause in Scotland was supported by a French garrison. In England, as we shall see, the keenest anxiety of the Government was lest orthodoxy should engender treason. Finally we have, on the part of Philip, the effort to revive the old crusading fervour against the Infidel which was crowned with victory at Lepanto.

When once the Counter-Reformation was under way, there was no mistaking its power nor its intensity of devotion. Even in Germany the tide of heresy was turned. Village by village, district by district, the southern provinces were won back for Rome. The Jesuits were everywhere, ready to sacrifice life and conscience for the cause, adapting themselves to every exigency, braving every peril. Nor was Calvinism idle: France, Scotland, the Low Countries, were all on fire; the two spiritual armies were everywhere fulfilling the prediction of their common Founder, that He had not come to bring peace, but a sword. It was a battle of giants. There was the Duke of Alva, a gaunt, cadaverous figure hiding beneath the courtesy of the hidalgo the cruelty of a fiend and the patience of a Red Indian; there was John Knox, in whom the austerity of Calvin was joined to the grimness of the old Scotch ballads, a terrible union; there was Don John of Austria, the young, the chivalrous, the ill-fated; there was William of Orange, the first of those Dutch heroes who found perfection, as is the manner of Dutch art, in thoroughness rather than brilliance; there were Egmont, and Parma, and the Guises, and Henry of Navarre. But the chief figure of all was neither a hero nor a saint, but a devout, plodding mediocrity, and yet the very soul of the Counter-Reformation, never hurried and never turned aside, ponderously revolving in that gloomy Escurial the schemes by which Europe was again to become one fold, and he himself its all-powerful guardian.

He might well conceive that such a scheme, which satisfied at once the aspirations of a Catholic and the ambition of a tyrant, only needed patience to make it certain of success. When every other state in Europe was enfeebled and distracted, when every civil war was fruitful of allies, he at least commanded an empire that might claim comparison with old Rome. Lands of which the Cæsars never dreamed poured their treasures into his coffers; the looms of Flanders, the rich plains of Lombardy, the beauty of Naples, all the pride and devotion of Spain, were his. He could march armies across Europe composed of troops, whose valour and discipline enabled them to rout forces ten times their size; he could put them under the command of men, whose military genius exceeded anything that Christian Europe had yet seen; he could pay them with the wealth of the Indies. He could sweep the seas with galleons that had swinged the Turk, or weathered the perils of an Atlantic voyage. His own Spain was loyal and united behind him, and its orthodoxy was rendered sure by the sharp eyes and sharper tortures of the Inquisition. Above all, he could fairly count upon a winning cause. The Counter-Reformation was young, and its spirit was like a rising wind. The sleeping Church, which men had thought dead, had risen in her might and majesty, and the sword which had quelled the barbarians and smitten the Saracen, was committed to his hands in her defence.

Amid such a conflict the chances of Elizabeth and her England might well appear to be of the faintest. Of the two militant religious systems she could rest upon the support of neither—both alike were fraught with danger to her throne. She reposed upon a compromise, a support which might be imagined the most doubtful of all in the time of stress. The business-like respectability of Archbishop Parker was far enough off from the sombre fire of Geneva, or the austere energy of a Sixtus. If Eng-

land was to survive, she must be animated by some other cause than the sectarian zeal which was agitating, in one form or another, every state of Christendom. That she could defy the Counter-Reformation by virtue of her Protestant fervour was impossible, when half the nation still inclined towards the old religion, and when the strongest fighting force of Protestantism was as much frowned upon as popery itself. It remained to be seen whether the sheer love of England could inspire the fortitude and self-sacrifice requisite to enable her, single-handed, to defy the overwhelming odds with which she was faced.

It was by God's providence that the sceptre of England, at this fearful crisis, had passed into the hands of one who was perhaps the ablest woman who ever sat upon a throne. For unlike the majority of the women of history, she was not only able to surround herself with discreet advisers, but time and again to take a line of her own, and even in the midst of her greatest counsellors she never for a moment let slip the reins of power. Not only was she able to strike with decision in the hour of need, but she could hold her forces in check with consummate patience, guiding the State through the shoals of an intricate foreign policy with the unerring hand of a master mariner.

The loyalty to Elizabeth differed from the feudal devotion of the past, and was more like that of the Athenians for Pericles, or the Americans for George Washington, the spirit which inspires the lines:

> "Love thou the gods, but withstand them, lest thy fame
> should fail in the end,
> And thou be their slave and bondman that wast made
> for their very friend!"

She stood alone in the eyes of her people, a royal virgin, Britannia incarnate. By all her most prominent subjects, Sidney, Spenser, Drake, Raleigh, she is regarded with a reverence which, though it sometimes touches on the grotesque, is not ill-deserved.

Elizabeth was no goddess, but a woman and a Tudor, the true daughter of her father. Her character was cast in a nobler mould than that of Henry VIII, but her instinctive sympathy with her subjects and her impatience of opposition were part of her paternal inheritance. In another feature, the least attractive of her character, she harks back to her Tudor grandfather. No miser could be more close-fisted than the original of Britomart, more short-sighted, as it would seem, in her meanness. To do her justice, there was a method in her parsimony which, if not of the ideal stateswoman, at least sprang from shrewd consideration of the facts with which she had to deal. For the secret of Tudor power, as she realized to the full, was financial. As long as the sovereign had small need of taxes, the power of the purse was dormant. Both the Henries had shown their skill by inventing expedients for collecting money without exciting opposition, either within or without the Houses. Elizabeth had no monasteries to plunder, and less scope or inclination for the tactics of Empson and Dudley. An expensive war, even if it were crowned with victory, would have placed her at the mercy of her Parliament; and such sums as she was forced to demand during her long and troubled reign did, in fact, sensibly increase the pretensions of her Commons, and prepare the way for the collapse of Tudor ideals which was to follow upon her death.

Whatever may have been the cause of her parsimony, the effects were not lovely. She starved her navy of food and ammunition in face of the Armada; she allowed whole regiments to be sacrificed in Holland. She failed to follow up her most splendid victory by the utter discomfiture of Spain, and her warmest admirer must admit that she allowed herself to be wedded to a system, after the necessity that called it forth had passed away. But if we consider the odds with which she had to cope, and the resource and firmness with which

she managed to overcome them, we shall look with a merciful eye upon the failings of Elizabeth. For the estimate of her subjects was after all not wide of the mark, and we shall be churlish indeed if we go about to deny her claim upon the gratitude of her countrymen.

She was, before all else, her people's Queen. "Let tyrants fear" was the utterance of a sovereign who loved her subjects, and was proudly conscious that her love was returned. From the very first, when her sister's jealousy and the murderous plots of Renard were threatening her life, she had known what it was to be the idol and highest hope of the nation. That honour she was resolved never to forego. While the troubled soul of Mary was hovering between life and rest, Count Feria had approached the Princess, who was awaiting the event at Hatfield, and tried to prove that she would be indebted for her crown to his master Philip. Elizabeth replied that she owed it only to her people. She was observed, upon her entry into London, to evince greater pleasure in the cheers of the multitude than in the graver salutations of her nobility. As Brice wrote, in his "Register of the Martyrs," the year after her accession:

> "When raging reign of tyrants stout
> Causeless, did cruelly conspire
> To rend and root the simple out
> With furious force of sword and fire;
> When man and wife were put to death;
> We wished for our Elizabeth."

Such was the woman to whom Providence had entrusted the destinies of our country. At her side, and by her choice, stood a group of counsellors, whom the agreement of their age with posterity has dignified, to a pre-eminent degree, with the title of wise. For the tinsel charm of a Leicester or an Essex, Elizabeth's feminine nature may have experienced some weakness, but it was upon the advice of a Burleigh, a Walsingham or a Bacon, that she preferred to lean, when she did not take matters into her

own hands, as was often the case. A masterly prudence was the quality for which these men were most distinguished. From sudden or brilliant coups they were generally averse, and with good reason, for weak and isolated as England then was, they could not afford to make mistakes. Where a false step might mean the bringing down upon England of the combined forces of the Counter-Reformation, it was as well to go warily. The master object of Elizabethan statesmanship, during the first half of the reign, was to gain time. The country was weak, humiliated, bankrupt; but every day she could ward off the crisis she was growing wealthier, more confident, fitter to win. It was for this task that the Queen's genius was especially suited. The ultra-Machiavellian subtlety with which she played off her rivals against each other, with which she reaped the fruits of war, while avoiding its expense and consequences, and even staked her own person as a counter in the game, has received less than justice from a generation more prone to dwell upon the romance of great personages than their statesmanship. She was a commander holding a position of vital importance with a skeleton force, and striving, like Duncan off the Texel, no matter by what means, to put off the enemy's attack until reinforcements had time to come up.

These delaying tactics were only part of Elizabeth's policy. On occasion she could be bold, and her reign opens with a stroke at once daring and effective. Peace had been signed with France, but a French army was in Scotland, and the old Franco-Scottish alliance threatened to become a religious and dynastic union. An army and a fleet were quickly dispatched to the scene of danger, and after a gallant defence, the enemy were compelled to quit the shores of Scotland for ever. Seldom have greater results been obtained at less expense, for the siege of Leith sealed once and for all the fate of the Catholic cause in the northern kingdom, and from this

time forth the Scottish ulcer, the bane of all our policy, begins to heal. But there is a deeper and less obvious sense in which Elizabeth and her counsellors engineered the final victory. True to the Tudor tradition, they took up the work of religious and social reform with a skill born of experience. The Tudor system of discipline was brought by Burleigh and his colleagues to its highest pitch of excellency. They made themselves as responsible for the industrial, and even the moral efficiency of the nation, as a modern general for the transport arrangements of his army. Firmly conscious of the end in view, they did not allow themselves to be deterred by any theoretical considerations from seeking its attainment, and the most superficial perusal of the State Papers, or the Hatfield House Manuscripts, will show what an extended view the Council took of their duties. Now it is a case of quarantine, now of running out a new groin at Dover, now some inventor has submitted the pattern of an arquebuse that will fire ten shots without reloading—an extraordinary anticipation of modern science, but one, apparently, which came to nothing. It is only from these records that we can get some faint idea of how Atlantean must have been the burden reposed upon the shoulders of Burleigh, and of the strength and capacity of a mind that could turn with equal resource to problems so diverse. This many-sidedness of genius is a characteristic of Elizabethan England, and indeed, of the Renaissance in general. It would be impossible, did the evidence admit of the least doubt, to believe that Leonardo da Vinci was one man.

Of the solemn resolution with which Elizabeth's statesmen applied themselves to their task, we may judge by the speech with which the Lord Keeper Bacon, worthy father of a more famous son, opened Elizabeth's first Parliament. He proposed three points for their especial consideration: first, the uniting of the people in a uniform

'order of religion, second, "for the reforming and moving of all enormities and mischiefs that might hurt or hinder the civil orders or policies of this realm; the third and last, is, advisedly and deeply to weigh and consider the state and condition of this realm, and the losses and decays that have happened of late to the imperial crown thereof; and therefore to advise the best remedies to supply and relieve the same." And continuing his exhortation, the Lord Keeper rises to a strain of grave and lofty eloquence, such words as could only proceed from one fully conscious of the odds against him, and religiously determined to surmount them. "Wherefore Her Highness willeth, and most earnestly requireth of you all, first and principally, for the duty you bear unto God, whose cause this is; and then for the service you owe to Her Majesty and your country, whose weal it concerneth universally; and for the love you ought to bear to yourselves, whom it toucheth one by one particularly; that in this consultation you, with all humbleness, singleness and pureness of mind, confirm yourselves together, using your whole endeavour and diligence, by laws and ordinance, to establish that, which by your learning and diligence shall be thought meet for the well performing of this godly purpose, and this without respect of honour, rule or sovereignty, profit, pleasure or ease, or of anything which might touch any person in estimation or opinion or wit, learning or knowledge; and without all regard of other manner of affection." The prose is involved, but the spirit is that of the heroes.

Of the way in which Elizabeth and her Council strove, on their part, to carry out this programme, we cannot treat even in the barest outline. One or two salient features, however, call for notice, if only because they are apt to be overlooked. One of the most misleading of historical terms is that which applies to their economic policy the name of the Mercantile System. Such a term

might possibly be used of the policy of a John Bright, or one of the classical economists, who really did tend to look at statesmanship from the business point of view to the exclusion of all others; but as applied to Burleigh it is woefully inapt. It would be better, though perhaps still a little misleading, to speak of it as the military system.

This is the keynote of Elizabethan statecraft. England was caught, as in a vice, between the two most powerful fighting creeds in Europe, both opposed to each other, both a source of danger to her, though in varying degrees. It was obvious that she must develop a power of resistance equal to the strength of either Rome or Geneva. The danger from Rome was immediate, that from Geneva remote; the one threatened to destroy and lay waste the realm from without, the other was actually to succeed in upsetting her Constitution from within. That direct repression was a necessary and legitimate weapon of government, Elizabethan statesmen never doubted for an instant. But a merely negative policy would be worse than useless. Repression must be supplemented by construction, and the nation must be moulded and drilled into a fighting power, equal to anything that could be brought against it. This had been the Tudor system all along; the two Henries had planted, Elizabeth watered.

She and her Council were not foolish enough to imagine that nations are preserved by armaments alone. Not that these were neglected, for by every sort of direct and indirect means, provision was made for a plentiful supply of recruits and the materials of war. But her outlook and Burleigh's were wider than that of the military expert, and there was no element of power with which she did not concern herself. Her own love of money made her alive to the necessity of having a prosperous nation at her back. Herein her policy differed from Philip's, for he was mainly concerned with pouring money into his own coffers, and stopping it from going out of his realm.

The Tudor wisdom cut deeper. The only abiding source of greatness lay in the nation itself, and all the wealth of the Indies could not compensate for an idle folk. Hence no pains were spared in the founding of new industries, and the encouragement of old ones. The Queen and Council were no less anxious to see victorious Englishmen, than to have them busily at work, and to provide them with the opportunity of disposing of their wares. Not the least of the romantic episodes of this reign is the way in which alum workers from the papal mines were smuggled into England, in order that the English cloth might be supreme in all departments.

The Elizabethan policy was no blind and exclusive worship of protection for its own sake. In several respects she mitigated the severity of previous legislation, and returned to the ways of Edward III. The stringency of the navigation laws was, for instance, very greatly relaxed; and a more liberal policy was adopted in respect of aliens. It says much for the government of Elizabeth, that it was able to set itself against a prejudice so deep-rooted as that of the average Englishman against foreigners, which had frequently been the occasion of bloody riots, notably the Evil May Day of Wolsey's time, when a certain Doctor Beale had taken upon him to inflame the mob, by preaching against the strangers who took the bread out of English mouths. It is not likely that the events of Mary's reign had softened that prejudice. But it was expedient to show some measure of national hospitality, because not only were our guests able to instruct us in all manner of crafts, but it was natural as the terror of the Counter-Reformation increased for Elizabeth to come forward as the protectress of Protestant exiles.

That there were drawbacks to this course, no one was in a better position to realize than the Queen herself. For, besides the immediate threat of the Counter-Reforma-

tion, there was the more remote but none the less formidable peril from the opposite camp. There is no doubt that the continual immigrations, especially into the Eastern Counties, had much to do with the growth of Nonconformity and, ultimately, of sedition. The tendency towards separation, it may be noticed, traces its rise in great part to the foreign influences that had free play during the reign of Edward VI. Even the Council regarded immigrants with a good deal of suspicion, and one of their letters to the Corporation of Rye declares that "whereas a number of evil disposed people under colour of religion and piety lately entered at sundry ports and creeks into the realm, the natural good subjects are like not only to be corrupted with the evil conditions of them which are naught, but also by the excess number of both sorts shall sustain divers ways such lacks as is not meet to be borne withal, besides other inconveniences justly to be feared by practices of the lewder sort." With this object the Council directs a searching inquiry into the numbers and condition of the strangers, and especially as to whether any of them are allowed by the Bishop to hold services in their own tongue. The corporation are, with the assistance of the Bishop, to find out how many of these strangers can be entertained without damage resulting to Englishmen, how many of what sort may be allowed to remain, and to what places it is convenient to direct those who, though worthy of toleration, are overcrowding their present place of domicile; "wherein we do not mean that any regard shall be had but only to such strangers as are known to be honest in conversation, and well disposed to the obedience of the Queen's majesty and the realm, for it is meant and so we will you that all other strangers of contrary sort as shall not shew a good and open testimony to be obedient . . . shall be charged as unprofitable persons to depart by a reasonable time."

'This document not only shows with what care and attention to detail the Council took in hand the problem of immigration, but also, by its mention of the Bishop, throws a sidelight upon her Church government. In this the Queen sought to develop the policy of Henry VIII under changed circumstances, and to steer between the extremes of Protestant and Catholic, to a Church that should be at once loyal and national. It was her high ambition to be spiritual as well as temporal leader of her people, yet it must be admitted that she was better fitted to look after the things of Cæsar than those of God. She had a love of pomp and ceremony, but unfortunately little sympathy with spiritual enthusiasm, and hence she was more concerned to avoid the dangers on either hand, and to impose order and discipline upon her flock, than to quicken true religion. She appointed an Archbishop after her own heart in Matthew Parker, no great divine nor spiritual enthusiast, but eminently a safe man, one who could be trusted to uphold the settlement already arrived at before his appointment, and above all, to stop the Reformation from going too far.

Elizabeth's estimate of the situation was, from her point of view, both sound and far-seeing. With neither Rome nor Geneva could the Tudor system of government agree. The danger from Rome was the worse, for that would have overturned it from without ; but the Calvinist danger from beneath was equally inevitable. The theology of Geneva was especially framed with a view to revolution, and as far as their methods were concerned, the weapons adopted by either of the principal religious combatants were strikingly similar. Both of them had to deal with royal or princely enemies, and hence neither of them scrupled to pick up More's weapon of tyrannicide, and with as pure a conscience as he. The assassin considered himself as much a martyr as those who had perished of old meekly in the arena. The man who

stabbed the Prince of Orange never doubted that he had given his life in God's cause, and through a series of tortures so elaborate and agonizing that it is pain to think of them, he preserved the constancy of a saint. The attempts upon Elizabeth's life were incessant, and never once did that heroic woman show the least fear, or condescend to take the most obvious precautions. Nor did theory lag behind practice. One of the most famous of Catholic divines, the Jesuit Mariana, discoursing pleasantly among the sunny gardens and orange trees of Barcelona, developed the case of Cain with an innocence that is almost lovable.

As for the Calvinists, it was not likely that they would discard so obvious a weapon. Indeed, with their implicit faith in Scripture, it was impossible that they should fail, in the Old Testament, to find justification for deeds which had passed for heroic among the fierce and merciless Children of Israel. It is only fair to say that the Protestants were generally less inclined to foul play than the Catholics, and the axe which beheaded Charles I was a more respectable weapon than the tent-peg of Jael or the pistol of Gerard.

Calvin, indeed, does not explicitly countenance tyrannicide. In the last chapter of the "Institutes," where he sets forth his political theory, he seems at first to go as far as Luther himself in respect of divine right, for he urges all people to obey their rulers, even if they happen to be tyrants. But he ends by introducing qualifications that have the effect of reversing the theory. God, he says, may of His mercy raise up deliverers to rid the land of its oppressors, and he instances Othniel as one of these. Now Othniel was the Hebrew who delivered the land from the yoke of Mesopotamia, and from the little we know of him, his methods appear to have been as honourable as those of William the Silent himself; but the most superficial reader could not fail to remark that immediately

after Othniel came Ehud, the left-handed Benjamite who treacherously murdered King Eglon in cold blood, with no less of divine sanction than had graced his predecessor. Besides which Calvin lays an absolute prohibition upon the individual citizen from obeying any order which is contrary to the law of God, which of course may be interpreted as meaning any distasteful order whatsoever.

What was implicit in Calvin comes out clearly in his successors. Under the stress of conflict, violent democratic theories were mooted, and Hotman's pseudo-historical Franco-Gallia was followed by Languet's statement of the Social Contract theory in its most revolutionary form, making the rulers only the servants of the people, and amenable to punishment for grave dereliction of duty. These were products of the Huguenot struggle, and the Scottish developments of the doctrine were characteristically grim. John Knox had aroused the fury of Elizabeth by discoursing of the intolerable rule of women, and he did not hesitate to defy and browbeat poor Mary in the cause of his God. Buchanan, in his eagerness to make the monarchy absolutely the slave of the new presbytery, would have reduced its functions to those which it fulfils to-day, and made the King a figure-head, powerless but edifying. Another controversialist, Christopher Goodman, laid down in its most extreme form the doctrine of resistance and rebellion, giving the people the right to take the law into their own hands, even when their own appointed magistrates had failed to act.

It was, then, with reason that Elizabeth set her face against the Puritans. Besides the fact that she was a Tudor, with inherited ideals, it was only natural for her to have identified the cause of England with that of the Crown. The two were, in her day, inseparable. It was only the strongest hand that could have held the nation together, and any division of counsel in the face of the enemy would have spelt irreparable disaster. It is only

too easy for the men of a later age to blame her for lack of toleration, and to cite instances of loyalty so pathetic as that of the Puritan who, when his right hand had been cut off, waved his left, and cried "God save the Queen!" But to have allowed Jesuits to go freely about the land, to have left prominent Catholics without any supervision, to have allowed eloquent agitators to inflame the people by indiscriminate attacks on bishops and Church government, would have been criminal madness, and would, incidentally, have led to a persecution much more bitter, when, in a very short time, those who benefited by such toleration had taken advantage of it to seize the reins of power. Seldom have men been tolerant about things they really care for, and the modern complacency which allows agnostic and ultramontane to rant upon adjacent tubs in Hyde Park, and beneficed divines to pull to pieces the foundations of Christianity, arises less from any love of freedom in the abstract, than from a characteristically modern lack of enthusiasm regarding these, and most causes. But let any one advocate in popular form some loathsome vice, or let him, in genteel circles, discourage the use of soap, and he will soon find how far toleration extends.

The matters about which Elizabeth persecuted were of life or death to her throne and country. Once she had decided to stand by the Anglican system, she had, at all costs, to get that decision respected. The commander of a besieged fortress would never permit criticism of his measures, and it is vital to grasp that Elizabeth, through the first thirty years of her reign, was in such a position. The system did indeed work hardly against such loyal Catholics as Sir Thomas Tresham, who was able, from his prison at Ely, to watch the musters drilling for the expected struggle against Parma, in which he would fain have borne a part. The life of such a man was indeed a hard one, subjected as he was to continual annoyance and

injury, not able to move five miles from his abode without leave, clapped into prison whenever the anxious vigilance of Burleigh apprehended special danger from the Spaniards, but conscious all the while of being a true and loyal-hearted Englishman. Yet what was to be done? All Catholics were not Treshams, and we know that even he was regarded with hatred by certain members of his Church on account of his patriotism. It was but a short step from admitting the Pope's supremacy in matters of faith, to countenancing his deposition of a heretic. When the Catholics begged to be allowed to serve against the enemy, they were told that their shutting up would more avail that behoofful service than the work of many hands. A stern saying, if war were not the sternest thing on earth. The Queen's government had to be carried on even if a few innocent men had to suffer in silence for their country's good, and this applied to Puritan and Catholic alike.

During the first phase of the reign England was under a cloud. It is true that a universal shout of acclamation had greeted the Queen's accession, but this was rather the fruit of relief than of triumph. Anything less "Elizabethan," in the modern significance of the word, than the spirit of the nation during these anxious years, it would be hard to imagine. The Italian Renaissance had been sterile here, because the heart of England had not been warmed to receive it. There had been abundance of sound scholarship, but even this was passing away, nor did Colet, Linacre and Ascham find worthy successors. There had been a driblet of poetry, Wyatt's pretty lyrics, Surrey's lumbering efforts in the wake of Petrarch, experiments in *ottava rima* and blank verse which:

> "Like a wounded snake drag their slow length along."

And now even these poor lights flicker down, and English literature seems in a well-nigh hopeless state. It is saturated with despair, and a thick darkness broods over

the land. Englishmen had not yet learnt to trust themselves, they had been brought to shame abroad, torn asunder by constant civil war, and it seemed as if the final catastrophe could not long be averted. Yet we see the first reviving glimmer of an ancient spirit which was in fullness of time to give a new bent altogether to the thoughts of our countrymen. We refer to a renewal of interest in the history and traditions of England. Two of the earliest specimens of this tendency are the "Mirroure for Magistrates," and "Gorboduc." The "Mirroure" is an enormous compilation by several hands, dealing with the misfortunes of past heroes, real or fabulous. The idea is taken from Boccaccio, and we find it adopted in English as early as the "Monk's Tale" in Chaucer, though the recital of so many woes proves too much for the patience of his jolly pilgrims. The spirit of the early Elizabethans was better tuned to such dirges, and called for more. The tragedy that runs through the series, or clanks along through an endless monotony of clumsy stanzas, is that of private persons, and there is little scope for patriotism. Sackville's contribution is perhaps the best in point of form, and will do for a sample of the rest. Walking alone, he meets Sorrow, who takes him to Avernus, where the Duke of Buckingham pours forth his tale of woe. Its most significant trait is the horror of civil war, which bitter experience had ingrained in the mind of almost every writer of the period, a horror which becomes a passionate aspiration for national unity.

There are exceptions to the general trend of the book, which may be taken as an augury of brighter things to come. The authors fall back upon the old English legend of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and it is impossible but that some of the patriotism of the original should find a place in the later version. Brutus duly receives his oracle from Diana concerning his future abode.

"Here of thy progeny and stock shall mighty kings descend,
And unto them as subject all the world shall bow and bend."

And in course of time he peoples it with "Britons fierce and good," of whom even Cæsar himself has to admit: "I have no cause of Britain conquest for to boast." Edmund Ironside cries:

> "O noble England, cause of my renoun,
> Queen of all islands canopied of heaven."

And the most noticeable passage of all is a warning against civil war, which ends as follows:

> "Let not ambition so the Earth deprive
> Of worthy wights, give them some better grace
> That they may run for country's weal their race,
> And not their blood with brainsick brawls debase."

The same note is struck in "Gorboduc," a stiff and tedious production modelled upon Seneca. The subject of the drama is the fortunes of an English Royal Family in prehistoric times, but the plot is again personal, and concerns the quarrels of the rival princes Ferrex and Porrex. Here again we find the horror of disunion, though the ideal of public spirit is pitched no higher than that of passive obedience to the sovereign. Indeed, as in all times of national depression, the very idea of fighting becomes distasteful. The horror and sadness with which these early Elizabethans regarded war appears in a poem of Gascoigne on the Dutch Rebellion, entitled "The Fruits of War"; the book echoes the gloomy tone of the "Mirroure," and concludes by praising the Queen for her pacific policy.

We see all the elements of a national spirit forming, a restlessness of intellect striving to find an outlet, a growing sense of unity, everything except the abounding energy which is life. The corpses in the valley of dry bones are indeed clothed with flesh and sinew, but as yet no vital breath is infused. It is to men of action that we must look to dispel the heavy clouds that darken the approaching dawn.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE TUDOR SYSTEM

WHILE the Queen kept the peace for nearly twenty-six years, the Rovers of the Sea, Hawkins, Drake, Frobisher and their peers, were building up a tradition of naval power that can never be eclipsed. It was one of the strangest of conflicts. It was essential that Elizabeth should postpone for as long as possible open hostilities with Philip. England needed time to recover from her depression, to gather strength, to foster patriotism. Philip, if he had been wise, would have struck soon, but it was not his way to do things in a hurry. While the Queen was exhausting every shift of diplomacy to postpone the crisis, her subjects were taking matters into their own hands. Copious ink has been spilled about the " piracy " of such men as Drake. There is about as much, and as little reason in such talk, as there is in referring to Washington as a traitor, and Charlotte Corday as a member of the criminal class. The facts of the case are sufficiently obvious. A mere handful of Spaniards, by an unprovoked aggression, backed with every resource of cruelty and treachery, had succeeded in conquering for their King large tracts of the American continent. Thereupon the Spaniards set up a preposterous claim, backed by the mandate of the greatest ruffian that ever wore the tiara, to treat the whole of the Western Hemisphere as a Spanish preserve. Not only the riches but the trade of

these vast regions were to become the monopoly of the bigoted and lazy inhabitants of the Peninsula, and torture and death were the penalties of any one who dared infringe it. Such a claim was as absurd as it was wicked, and deserved to be resisted to the last extremity.

The English were not the first to contest it, for before our rovers had crossed the ocean, French captains were at work harrying the Spanish Main. It was in no spirit of blind adventure that our seamen put forth. It was, and is, a legitimate aim for an industrious nation to seek markets for her wares, and the spirit of commercial enterprise was abroad. The new and little-understood factor of capital had begun to enter into all important operations. The gild system was sinking into obsolescence, and in its place were arising wealthy companies, often possessing special privileges and financed by joint stock. The rudiments of the modern system of credit had begun to make their appearance, and Antwerp, in particular, was the centre of cosmopolitan banking enterprise, until the mutineers of Spain made it sweat gold. To open up new trade routes became a master ambition of the time. It was with this object that the heroic Chancellor made his expedition to the North-East, and Frobisher essayed to open up a North-West Passage. Companies were formed to work and police the trade routes opened by the explorers, and not the least arduous of the tasks of government was that of assigning the limits of their monopoly. Even the Queen condescended to be a partner in Drake's voyage round the world.

John Hawkins, who was the first Englishman seriously to contest the Spanish claim, was more of a trader than a warrior. That he engaged in the slave trade is a fact we must deplore, but in his time the trade was regarded as lawful and Christian by all parties, and no more of a crime than killing Saracens had been to the early crusaders.

His enterprise was regularly financed by subscriptions, and all that he asked was permission honestly to dispose of his wares to the inhabitants of the Spanish colonies, who, for their part, were only too eager to do business. He could further urge in his defence that freedom to trade with Philip's subjects had expressly been conceded by treaty, and never revoked. If in spite of all this the Spaniards were determined to bang the doors of their markets in Hawkins' face, he was naturally resolved to force them open. In revenge, he was made the victim of one of the blackest acts of treachery ever practised. Nor was this all. Some poor English seamen of his force had been compelled to land, and had been captured. On the arrival of the Inquisition three years later, they were dragged from their peaceful employment to torture and the stake. Was it such a great matter that Drake relieved these Spaniards of some of their gold and silver?

In what contrast to the early gloom is the spirit of this Francis Drake, the man who expressed the new movement in action as Shakespeare bodies it forth in thought! His prestige was world-wide. If to us he was a hero, in Spain he was a devil; Valdes surrendered at the very mention of his name. There is the note of the sea in Drake, and his sayings are as inspiring and characteristic as those of Nelson himself. "God grant you have an eye to the Prince of Parma, for if we live, by God's mercy, I hope so to handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia that he shall ere long wish himself in St. Mary Port among his orange trees!" They have a tradition in Devonshire about Drake, which just expresses the work he accomplished for his country. The water-supply of Plymouth was deficient, so Drake galloped up to the heart of Dartmoor, that most melancholy of all waste places, and straightway Drake's Leat sprang from the soil and danced after him all the way back. And so the fountains of the love of England, which had so long been

'pent underground, sprang to the surface to greet Drake and his peers, and became the river from which a mighty nation has drunk the waters of life and beauty.

Nor were the sea-dogs of Elizabeth simply bluff adventurers of the type one meets in novels, caring neither for God nor man. On the contrary, the chief of them might be better described as religious enthusiasts, with the name of God always on their lips, and the fear of Him always in their hearts. It is in their lives, especially, that we can trace what was the great formative religious influence of this time, not the Church nor the distinctive tenets of the Reformation, but the English Bible, which had been clothed in its precious raiment of many-coloured prose by the master hand of Tindale. On Frobisher's third voyage of discovery, he drew up a list of articles for the observation of his fleet, the first of which runs as follows: "To banish swearing, dice, and card-playing, and filthy communication, and to serve God twice a day with the ordinary service usual in Churches of England, and to clear the glass, according to the old order of England." Hear the language of another North-West voyager, John Davis, in the course of his narrative: "Yet in this deep distress the mighty mercy of God, when hope was past, gave us succour, and sent us a fair lee, so as we recovered our anchor again and new moored our ship, whereby we saw that God manifestly delivered us." Such language as this will be familiar enough to readers of Hakluyt.

But devout and noble as these "pirates" proved themselves, the character of Drake easily outshines them all. He is one of those men whom to read about is to love, and to have known must have been to adore. Like all Christian heroes from Launcelot to Gordon, he was as simple as a child, and it must have been an extraordinary scene when, before the execution of John Doughty, captain and condemned man shared a

meal and partook together of the Holy Communion. "This being done, our General made divers speeches to the whole company, persuading us to unity, obedience, love and regard of our voyage; and for the better confirmation thereof, willed every man the next Sunday following to receive the Communion, as Christian brethren and friends ought to do, which was done in very reverent sort, and so with good contentment every man went about his business." It was as friends and Christian brethren that Drake, stern disciplinarian as he was, taught his followers to treat each other, and he went so far as publicly to express his contempt of the gentleman who scorned to haul at the same rope as the common sailor. Not only were the words of faith constantly on his lips, but he never ceased to remind his comrades of their loyalty to their Queen and the honour of their country. "If this voyage," he cries, "shall not have a good success, we should not only be a scorning or a reproachful scoffing stock unto our enemies, but also a great blot to our whole country forever. And what triumph it would be to Spain and Portugal!" Moreover, in spite of the cruelties which were practised on Englishmen, Drake never ceased to be as humane as he was gallant, and his conduct to those who came into his power was, even by their own admission, that of a Christian and a gentleman.

In the seventies dangers began to thicken round England. The Counter-Reformation had now brought all its force into the field, and the Pope's Bull of deposition was nailed to Lambeth Palace. The discovery of the Ridolphi Plot must have shown Elizabeth, if demonstration were needed, on how insecure a tenure she held her life and throne. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew had set the joy-bells ringing in Rome; the Society of Jesus was beginning to put forth its secret, all-pervading power; everywhere the might of Rome was gathering for the final conquest. Then followed the most ominous event of

all. The Kingdom of Portugal, with her colonies and navy, fell into the hands of Spain, and Philip was now at the head of an empire of fabulous extent, comprising the new-discovered lands of both hemispheres. To compensate for this there was but one bright spot upon the horizon. Calvinism had lifted her banner in the Netherlands, and was offering a defiance, that must have seemed hopeless, to the genius of Alva. Englishmen were taught to love their country by the example of an heroic people fighting for their freedom. The democratic bias of modern times has done something more than justice to men who, though constantly beaten, usually enormously outnumbered their enemies, and sustained such disgraceful defeats as Gemblours, where Farnese, with a handful of cavalry, stampeded the whole Dutch army.

But in four respects the Dutch justly earned the admiration of Englishmen. The first was their dogged persistency; the spirit which inspired the armies of William the Silent was none other than that of De Ruyter's fleet, and the commandoes of Louis Botha and De Wet. Like their religion, like their art, it was intense without being joyous. The second lay in the fact that though, like the Spaniards against Napoleon, they were always being beaten in the open, they were well-nigh invincible behind walls. The third was their success upon the sea, which sent England into a delirium of joy upon the capture of Brill. Fourth and last was the heroic mould of their leader; "our cities," he said, "are pledged to each other to stand every siege, to dare to the utmost, to endure every possible misery." Thus was the example of the Dutch calculated to arouse the sympathy of a neighbour nation, connected with them by ties of blood and religion, and whither thousands of refugees resorted, bringing with them the story of their wrongs. The first step taken in the war with Spain was to land troops in Holland, and with good reason. As early as 1568 we find

Sir Nicholas Throckmorton writing to Cecil about the general design of the Catholics to exterminate all nations differing from them in religion. "What shall become of us when the like professors with us shall be utterly destroyed in Flanders and France?" The Spanish army in the Netherlands, which was their finest army, might at any time be diverted from its immediate purpose. In 1569 we find one of the Cecil letters making mention of a project to land the Duke of Alva, with the Council of Blood and a perfectly equipped army, upon the Norfolk coast, to join hands with certain English lords. Is it any wonder that under such circumstances the Council were careful to put prominent Catholics out of mischief's way? Then followed the abortive conspiracy of Ridolphi, in which the Holy Father himself had a hand, and in the course of which the Council of the Catholic King had coolly debated the expediency of murdering our Queen, and which included a joint invasion from Flanders and Brittany. It is hard to imagine the state of mind of a man like the Duke of Norfolk, who could deliberately plot to deliver over his motherland into such hands as those of Alva, and one almost grudges such a scoundrel the merciful swiftness of his death. A third plan of invasion emanated from the brain of Don John of Austria, whose romantic fancy was taken by the woes of Mary Queen of Scots, and whose practical genius was alive to the possibility of finding safe employment for his mutinous troops, and the chance of dealing the *coup de grâce* to Spain's most dangerous enemy.

Even if these perils had been lacking, it would not have altered the fact that the Netherlands was then, as now, the key of our European position. In striking there, Elizabeth was taking a strategical step as sound as her occupation of Havre had been foolish and abortive. But her conduct of the operations displayed her weakest side. It had never yet been the task of the Tudors to wage war

upon the grand scale, and their abilities had rather been exercised in the direction of keeping out of it. Military operations cost money, and money the Queen was not prepared to demand or spend if she could possibly help it. She had dealt a blow after her own heart, when she had seized and confiscated the treasure that was on its way to Alva, though the step was not so cynical as is usually represented, and was only taken in response to high-handed action on the part of Spain. But when it came to supporting her troops at the front, her conduct was not only niggardly but disgraceful, and the poor fellows were allowed to die like flies without the least relief from their sovereign.

It is partly to this stinginess on the part of Elizabeth, and partly to her wise hesitation from involving herself in war, that we must attribute the rampant individualism which marks the intermediate phase of the reign. What with the refusal of the Government to take the lead against Spain, and the very large scope allowed to private adventurers, it was no wonder that love of self was apt to supplant the love of country in many an English breast, and the need for steady discipline in a common cause was not realized as fully as it might have been. We have seen how unjust it is to speak of the sea-rovers as pirates, but piracy in its crudest form was practised on an extensive scale. The records of Rye show that the Channel was a perfect hornets' nest of corsairs, English, French and Dutch, many of whom were no doubt inspired by genuine hatred of a national enemy, but some, at any rate, by an impartial desire for plunder. And the records of our operations in Holland show not only much personal bravery, but also a lamentable lack of discipline on the part even of the highest officers.

This brings us to the soldier-poet, who contributed, like Drake, to reviving the pride of Englishmen in their country, but whose career is marred by the noble egotism

which made him fall just short of being as perfect a patriot as he was a knight. Only once in his life did Sidney come into contact with the mighty seaman, and that was when he suddenly turned up on the eve of Drake's West Indian expedition of 1585. The episode is obscure, but it is evident that Drake neither wanted such a comrade, nor believed that Sidney would have let him be master in his own fleet. The young man was a fervent admirer of William the Silent, and one of the first to urge a vigorous offensive against Spain as England's best mode of defence. It seems a thousand pities that he did not survive as long as his friend Spenser, to catch the rising patriotism of the time, and to embody his ideals in work as beautiful as the best of his sonnets. As it is, he will be remembered as a courtier-poet of the Renaissance, of pastoral romance and of pensive love. In his "Defence of Poetry" we do indeed catch a note of patriotism, for in recounting the virtues that poets inspire in their readers he mentions Cicero, as making known the force the love of country hath in us. Had he only lived a few years longer, he might have instanced Shakespeare. Sidney's death brought out, in a supreme degree, both his virtues and his defects. His heroic valour, and the even more heroic Christianity of his last moments, are well known. But we are less apt to realize that his conduct, and that of his fellow-captains, was such as, according to modern notions, would have brought them before a court martial. Their business was to carry out a particular operation in the face of the most scientific troops in Europe, and instead of doing this, they indulged in a pell-mell, disorderly charge, each fighting for his own hand, like so many knights at a joust. That is not the most exalted form of valour, nor is it the way in which victories are won. No wonder that the Spanish convoy, which was the object of the manœuvre, got away.

All this may seem surprising in view of the discipline,

which it had been the special work of the Tudors to enforce upon the nation. But it was just in the field of war that their system had never had an opportunity of getting itself applied, and in fact it depended upon peace for its foundation. It had been the policy of the Crown to avoid blows and expense as much as possible, and for considerably more than a century England had not known what a great war meant. Now that the necessity was upon us, not only did the Government strenuously avoid giving any sort of lead, but the very notion of discipline seemed to be lost. Drake, indeed, was alive to the seriousness of his cause, and never ceased to point his "Christian bretheren and friends" to a patriotic and unselfish ideal. His own conduct as a subordinate was irreproachable, except in the doubtful case of Valdes' galleon, where it certainly admits of defence. Howard expressly commends him, and even when, after the Corunna expedition, he is under a cloud, he never refuses to carry out such work as comes to hand, or loyally to aid those lesser men who have stepped into his place. Towards any deliberate insubordination he is rightly merciless. His character never appears to better advantage than when he passes sentence on Doughty, a gentleman the exact extent of whose offences is not manifest, but who was certainly spreading disaffection in the fleet. "If this voyage go not forward," says Drake, "which I cannot see how possibly it should if this man live, what a reproach it will be not only unto our country, but especially unto us." He is equally merciless on the Cadiz expedition, when his vice-admiral, a man of the Minorca Byng type, sent him a timorous criticism in which he scented mutiny. The unfortunate man was placed under arrest, and then succeeded in sailing away home with his ship, for which outrageous conduct Drake demanded his death, and might have obtained it had he not been out of favour with the Queen.

Indeed, the country was far from having completed its training in patriotism. Even at the Court there were friends of Spain; even heroes were too often playing for their own hand. Of the most sublime exploit of all, that of Grenville in the *Revenge*, we might say that it was magnificent, but it was not war. He had no business to sacrifice an important ship of the Royal Navy to a point of personal pride or honour, when he had a fair chance of saving her. This, of course, was after the repulse of the Armada, but that event marks the dividing-line between the intermediate and the last stage of Elizabeth's reign. It was then that the personal and disconnected valour of individuals merged into an outburst of patriotism as intense and glorious as anything recorded in history, and the ideal of Drake became that of his countrymen.

And now, as the dark days end and the time of glory draws nigh, there is an immense undisciplined riot of energy, a "Sturm and Drang," which expresses itself in a score of fantastic ways. First, there is that strange outburst of bad taste and high spirits that centres round Lyly's Euphues, which seems inspired by the spirit of a schoolboy turned loose in a laboratory for the first time, who wants to try all kinds of experiments by mixing the contents of different bottles. There is plenty of patriotic sentiment in Lyly, and in "Euphues and his England" there is a letter to a friend in Venice, which is an unstinted panegyric on the charms and merits of the young man's island home.

But it is in Marlowe that the reaction against the early Elizabethan gloom bursts forth in the fullness of its strength. The resounding splendour of his blank verse is no mere accident of character, but the uncontrollable exuberance of his time trying to find expression. As we should naturally expect, his energy, like that of so many of the gentlemen buccaneers, ran entirely upon individual lines. We shall best realize the spirit of Marlowe by

comparing him with a man who has, in our own days, drunk from the same spring, Frederick Nietzsche. In both we find the same exuberance of will, which knows of no restraint, save from without. But while Nietzsche is so much the superior in philosophic grasp, Marlowe in one vital respect goes beyond him. He shows the paradox of human will, we feel through all his plays that we are surrounded by influences, against which the mightiest human energy must expend itself as vainly as the waves against an ironbound coast. Mortimer may aspire to unseat kings, Guise to plant his standard on the Pyramids, Tamburlaine to lord it over the world, Barabbas for untold wealth and revenge, Faustus to wield all the powers of hell, but their doom is as inevitable as the sunrise, and the higher they climb the deeper and more fearful is their fall.

It is the fashion to compare Marlowe's Edward II with Shakespeare's Richard II, but the difference between them is vital. All the characters in Marlowe's play, Gaveston, Edward, Isabella, Mortimer, and the great barons, are so many jarring wills of different strength, and nowhere do we find any sentiment more exalted than that of pride, and the lust of power or revenge. Marlowe could never have conceived the character of the dying patriot whose last thought was for his " dear, dear land." He is as innocent of public spirit, as he is of those charges of blasphemy and atheism which are the stock-in-trade of the Philistine. He is the greatest of a school, which rises about this time and revels in bloodshed and horror, in the purposeless clash of wills and energy of which the foremost representatives are Kyd and Greene, and which produces such plays as " Jeronimo," the " Spanish Tragedy " and " Selimus." These men, like the sea-rovers, are the representatives of the age of transition.

From the strategist's point of view it must always seem a matter of regret that Drake and his fellow-admirals

were not allowed the means of executing the plan they so eagerly urged upon the Council, that of destroying the Armada in its anchorage at Corunna Harbour. That they could have done so is hardly open to doubt, but such a victory would have been a disaster to England. Drake was right, and could not possibly have come to any other decision, but there are dispensations of Providence which override the wisest calculations. It was expedient that the fleet of towering galleons, seven miles from end to end, should make its resistless, deliberate way up the Channel, that from day to day England should be kept in mortal suspense, that the fleet should arrive in Calais Roads to all appearance intact, and ready to open communications with the Prince of Parma. Hooker, the divine, who had lived through the crisis, and whose thoughts cannot but have been inspired by what he himself had witnessed, writes in one of his dedications, "The fear of external dangers causeth forces at home to be more united; it is to all sorts a kind of bridle, it maketh virtuous minds watchful, it holdeth contrary dispositions in suspense, and it setteth those wits to work on better things which would otherwise be employed in worse." No better description could have been given of the effect of this crisis upon the country.

It was, in fact, the turning-point; here was a common peril bravely and victoriously met. The nation, by this time, was aware what it had to expect at the hands of the Counter-Reformation. The Marian persecution was not forgotten, and the lesson was further enforced by a book exactly calculated to hit off the temper of the times, one whose partisan inaccuracy only added to the effect produced by its erudition and obvious sincerity, Foxe's "Book of Martyrs." Besides, a few broken and pitiable wretches had returned from the dungeons of the Inquisition, bringing with them the account of what things were reserved for those who fell into the hands of Spain, the

rack and the galleys, the strappado and the auto-da-fé. There were few now, of any creed, who wished to revive the times of Philip and Mary. Yet the finest of European armies was mustering almost in sight of our shores, the most imposing fleet ever seen had entered the Channel to convoy it thither. When the danger had passed it seemed as if God Himself were on the side of England. From the Queen downwards the feeling was "Not unto us, O Lord!" The medal struck to commemorate the occasion bears the inscription, which now adorns the monument on Plymouth Hoe, where Drake stands facing seaward: "He blew with His winds, and they were scattered."

Elizabeth stands forth at this crisis as the idol and defender of her people. We need not extenuate her faults. She did not understand the principles on which war ought to be conducted, she was guilty of cruelly starving her fleet, and her admirals were justly indignant at her parsimony. "Here," writes Howard to Burleigh, "is the gallantest company of captains, soldiers and mariners that I think was ever seen in England. It were pity they should lack meat"; and again, writing to Walsingham, he says, "Sir, for the love of God and our country, let us have with speed some great shot sent us!" But we must not forget that the Queen herself was in desperate straits for money, and that she was only holding fast to a well-tried system after circumstances had, for the first time, put it out of date. But without sparing any of our indignation at her treatment of her soldiers and sailors, we may at least admit the undaunted mien she displayed in the face of every peril, to have been of inestimable value from the standpoint of national unity. Her "Let tyrants fear" was just the rally-call for a nation which only saw in Elizabeth the Heaven-sent leader, the Virgin Britannia who stood between them and slavery. A year or two later, we have a curious document, which is characteristic of her proud trust in her country's cause, intimating that

whereas certain Englishmen had fled inland at the approach of the invader, they would find her, if the cowardice were repeated, far more terrible than Philip.

At the approach of the Armada, the note of defiance swells into fierce and joyous unison. Lord Morley writes to the Council, offering to supply troops to resist the foreign attempts upon his "natural and sweet country"; from every Channel port put out privateers eager to join in the fray; from the Lord High Admiral downwards Catholics rallied round the Crown, even those who were shut up by an early form of "preventive detention" entreated in vain to serve. A seaman who had escaped from captivity in Spain writes that "they make much account of their beastly great ships, but any good English ship is able to combat with them." Hawkins writes that "it is not honourable for the Queen of England to be in any fear of the King of Spain"—of Howard's patriotism we have already gleaned some evidence. The noblest utterance of all and the simplest, comes appropriately from Drake: "Never was fleet so strong as this, but the Lord of strength is stronger." A contemporary ballad runs:

"And you, dear brethren,
That beareth arms this day:
For safeguard of your native soil,
Mark well what I shall say.
Regard your duties,
Think on your country's good:
And fear not in defence thereof
To spend your dearest blood.
Our gracious Queen
Doth greet you every one:
And saith she will among you be,
In every bitter storm.
Desiring you
True English hearts to bear:
To God, to her and to the land
Wherein you nursed were."

From the Court emanates another unjustly forgotten work of art, this time in prose, by one Anthony Marten,

gentleman sewer to Her Majesty, of whom we know little save that he appears to have been an able man with his sword, for he had been in disgrace for killing one who waylaid him by night. This little work, written in the first glow of national triumph, is his sufficient monument, and is not without its lesson for the Englishman of our own day. He starts by showing the justice of our cause, and the wickedness of the attack, a question in which Philip might perhaps have had something to say. But these Elizabethans were no hypocrites, they loved their country with such a tender affection, that it seemed to them that God Himself must do no less, and as if her destruction would be the ruin of the Gospel and all the best hopes of Christendom.

But Marten's purpose is not to flatter, but solemnly to warn his countrymen, to awaken them to the seriousness of their situation, and to counsel them to an even greater vigilance and patriotism than they have hitherto displayed. "Now, therefore, my countrymen, pluck up your spirits, ye that have courage in you; advance yourselves, ye that have so long lain in security . . . for ye deal not now with such nations, which either for their poverty could not, or for lack of courage durst not, or for want of stayed minds would not; but ye encounter with them which are rich, hardy, resolute and frequented with daily victories, which neglect no opportunity nor advantage; which desire not to be lords to-day and loiterers to-morrow; which, if they set one foot, are ready to enter in with both." In short, Marten wishes to impress his countrymen with the greatness of their cause, their enemy, and their task of resistance, and correctly diagnosing their case, entreats them to break with their besetting sin of indiscipline.

He then proceeds to enumerate a few practical suggestions towards this end. While commending the enthusiasm with which the general call to arms was

responded to by all classes, he condemns the slovenliness and neglect of those whose business it was to provide the material of war, "as it may seem they do nothing for conscience and duty, and for the love they bear their country; but for a bare show to blind the eyes of the world, and to deceive the laws of the realm." Again, in many cases, the efficiency of the levy had been marred by corruption, evidently; from the context, people who could pay for substitutes had got off service, a complaint not unheard of nowadays where service is compulsory. For the all-important arm of the cavalry, much more might be done by our nobility and gentry to improve the breed of horses. Then, in respect both of pay and commissariat, abuses are rife among mean captains, dishonest purveyors and private persons, who withhold provisions, thereby withdrawing themselves from the Queen's service, "besides that they be enemies to their country and betray the commonweal." Dissensions, and jealousies among officers constitute another danger to the cause, a moral for whose enforcement Captain Doughty had already had to swing. Finally, increase of luxury is sapping the spirit of the upper class, paving the way, if Marten had only known it, for their fatal degeneracy under the Stuarts.

"And now," cries Marten, "even now is the time that shall try who is faithful unto God and obedient to his country . . . now, even now, is the axe laid to the root, that if ye bring not forth good fruit, you shall surely be overthrown." He exhorts the common soldiers to think, not of the bravery of their apparel, in which their enemies can always surpass them, but of the efficiency of their service. And thus he addresses his countrymen at large: "Generally, all ye good men of the realm . . . prepare yourselves to all service and loyalty, be strong and hardy. Comfort yourselves in the justice of your cause. Convert your ploughs into spears and your scythes into swords.

Turn your bowls into bows and your pastimes into musquet shot. Abandon all your vain delights and idle games. Imitate the immortal renown of your English ancestors. If ever ye desire fame or honour or glory to your nation, now is the time that by your prowess, ye may double and redouble the same. Now is the time that either by shameful cowardice ye shall bring yourselves into captivity; or by stout and courageous minds, obtain a noble victory."

It is difficult even now to read this noble and stirring appeal, without feeling something of the emotion that must have thrilled the nation in that glorious dawn, and asking ourselves, perchance, whether the England of George V be faced by perils any less urgent than that of Elizabeth, and whether Marten's counsel does not apply equally to ourselves. It is in keeping with the solemnity of Marten's call to arms, that it should end with prayer to God, for England and for England's Queen. "She seeketh not her honour, but thine; not the domination of others, but a just defence of herself; not the shedding of Christian blood, but the saving of poor afflicted souls. Come down, therefore, come down, and deliver thy people by her. To vanquish is all one with thee, by few or by many; by want or by wealth; by weakness or by strength. O possess the hearts of our enemies with a fear of thy servants. The cause is thine, the enemies thine, the afflicted thine; the honour, victory and triumph shall be thine." This prayer was used in the Queen's chapel, and we cannot but recall the words of Fuller: "Leave we her in the choir of St. Paul's Church, devoutly on her knees, with the rest of her nobles in the same humble posture, returning their unfeigned thanks to the God and giver of all victory."

The floodgates of literature are opened. The Elizabethan spring has dawned, with all its profusion of life, blossoming into song. Indeed, it is in songs which almost

sing themselves, that we catch the full spirit of this triumphant epoch. We have seen how the age of Cressy had been marked by a similar manifestation of joy, but the charm of the "Cuckoo Song" and the Robin Hood ballads is now eclipsed. Which of Robin's old singers could have framed such a chorus as:

"Hey, jolly Robin Hood!
Ho, jolly Robin Hood!
Love finds out me as well as thee
To follow me in the greenwood!"

or when did the sheer joy of being alive ever overflow in such notes as:

"Hey nonny no!
Men are fools that wish to die!
Is't not fine to dance and sing
While the bells of death do ring?
Is't not fine to swim in wine?
And turn upon the toe,
And sing Hey nonny no,
While the winds blow and the seas flow,
Hey nonny no!"

There is a quaint play, which illustrates the state of popular feeling at the time of the Armada. It is written on the lines of the old moralities, in which abstract qualities are personified on the stage. But the moralities used to be confined to individual morals, whereas this deals with matters of State. For while Pleasure, Wit and other qualities are engaged in conversation, in rushes Diligence, as Captain Fleming burst in upon the admirals on Plymouth Hoe, to tell them that the Spaniard is at the doors,

"To slay, subdue, to triumph and torment."

Nothing daunted, and after the example of Drake, Policy counsels the rest:

"To carry as it were a careless regard
Of these Castilians and their accustomed bravado."

Presently the enemy arrive, represented by an array of odious vices, Shealty, Tyranny, Pride, thundering death

and destruction to all things English. Pomp, however, gives answer on behalf of England:

> Soft sirs, ye brave too fast!
> Castilians, know that Englishmen will knock."

And indeed they knock to such effect that the Spaniards are driven off the stage with ignominy.

There had been for some time a will to revive the traditions of our past. Hitherto, as in "Gorboduc" and "The Mirroure," men had looked backwards through an atmosphere of sustained gloom. But now a more joyous feeling pervades the thought of the time. George Peele is the first name we have to notice in this connection. He continues the tradition of Marlowe, but though he never attains the sweep and majesty of the elder dramatist, he excels him in subtlety of portraiture and, above all, in patriotic feeling.

Peele's "Edward I" was published in 1593, and crude and diffuse though it is, in one respect it shows a notable advance. There is not only a personal, but a national interest. In the first scene we have lines like:

> "Illustrious England, ancient seat of Kings,"

which reminds us of Shakespeare. In what climate, asks the Queen Mother:

> "Have men not quaked and trembled at the fear
> Of England and her royal conquerors?"

Not only this, but Peele is as ready to recognize patriotism in another nation as in his own. Llewellen, Prince of Wales, cries to one of his followers:

> "Come, Rice, arouse thee for thy country's good,"

and Rice ap Meredith answers, in reference to his prince's approaching marriage, that it

> "Cannot but turn to Cambria's common good."

No such sentiments are to be found in Marlowe. Not the least remarkable feature of the play is the way in which

poor Queen Elinor is reviled for no other reason, apparently, than that she was a Spaniard.

Another play by the same author is the "Battle of Alcazar," a chapter of horrors worthy of Kyd and Greene at their grimmest, but relieved by the presence of a jolly English adventurer called Stukely, a type evidently becoming popular with audiences just then.

We have now to consider three attempts to construct an English epic. Drayton's "Barons' Wars" does not give scope for the splendid martial buoyancy of his "Battle of Agincourt," but the cry for national unity is the motive predominant:

> "The bloody factions and rebellious pride
> Of a strong nation. . . .

are what he sets out to narrate.

Daniel, in his "Civil Wars" sings in the same strain of

> "the civil wars, tumultuous broils,
> And bloody factions of a mighty land."

The keynote of both these poems is not pensive and regretful like that of "The Mirroure," but rather of furious indignation that a country so powerful abroad should be divided against itself

> "As though that prowess had but learned to spill
> Much blood abroad to cut her throat with skill."

Warner's "Albion's England" is planned on a more ambitious scale than either of the preceding works. It is a long ballad in a monotonous seven-foot metre just on the border-line between verse and doggerel. The author proposes to describe the "gestes of Britons stout," and does so at well-nigh interminable length, beginning with Noah and ending with the Armada, with an appendix about Æneas. The narrative is almost passionless; you can plunge into it at any point and hardly notice the difference. Only once does it soar to something like enthusiasm, and that is where Howard's fleet

> "Even at first, so pleased it God,
> Pursued as if in chase."

In Drayton we find another characteristic, which has always marked English patriotism, the deep-rooted love of the soil, which was to attain its highest development in Wordsworth. The "Polyolbion" is a minute poetical description of England, county by county, and represents a tendency to move away from the vague and conventional cult of shepherds and shepherdesses, which had been borrowed from Theocritus or from Renaissance Italy. The very name shows with what pleasant associations Drayton linked the meadows and greenwoods of his country. What the "Polyolbion" did in verse was done in prose by the monumental Latin work of Camden, of which the first edition was published two years before the coming of the Armada. The minute and affectionate survey of "the most famous island in the world," with its wealth of observation and its curious learning, is not without its value even now. What Camden had done for the whole of England was being accomplished on a smaller scale by such men as "Lambarde the learned," whose grave is at Halling in Kent, and who is the first of the brilliant line of scholars who have contributed to the study of that county's antiquities. Even more remarkable than the "Britannia," from the patriotic standpoint, are Camden's "Remains." These erudite researches are informed by a very ecstasy of love for the land their author could never know enough about. "To praise Britain according as the dignity thereof requires, is a matter which may exercise, but would not tire, the happiest wit furnished with the greatest variety of learning." He speaks of the "honour and precedence of Britain beyond other realms," and claims that "their military glory hath surpassed all; for they have terrified the whole world with their arms," while as for the arts of peace, "it doth also redound to the eternal honour of England that our countrymen have twice been schoolmasters to France." By such instances, and many more, does Camden justify his faith that

England, so recently without a hope, is by far the best among nations, and not content with his own opinion, he ransacks his records for the eulogies of the patriots who have gone before him.

Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals" were composed in the early years of James I's reign, but are a continuation of the same movement. Born in the county of Drake and Raleigh, among the gorse and heather of Dartmoor and the wooded valleys of Devon streams, Browne blends a love of his native scenery with the hackneyed stuff about shepherds and muses which was the delight of the Court. There is a peace, almost a tameness about his work, which shows that he is past the tumultuous period of the Armada.

Coming now to the ballad literature of the period, two pieces, celebrating respectively past and present glories, stand out pre-eminent; these are Drayton's "Agincourt," and the "Ballad of Brave Lord Willoughby." The former is surpassed by no patriotic lyric in the language. Two only can so much as aspire to compare with it, Blake's "Hymn before Battle," and that modern song of the English flag which contains the lines :—

> "First of the scattered legions, under a shrieking sky,
> Dipping among the rollers, the English flag goes by!"

Drayton wrote another and longer poem many years later upon the same subject, but the fire had died down, nor could he ever recover the swing and buoyancy of the lines which describe King Harry "dinging" down the French host, or of that inspired close :

> "Oh, when shall Englishmen
> With such acts fill a pen,
> Or England breed again,
> Such a King Harry!"

Though we had no Agincourt on land to set beside the defeat of the Armada, there was plenty of food for pride in the exploits of some of our troops in the Netherlands. The operations, on the whole, were unsatisfactory, they were conducted upon a niggardly scale, marred, too often,

by indiscipline and incompetence, and not very loyally backed by our allies. But when it came to push of pike, there was no regiment of Parma's that could claim superiority to an equal number of Englishmen. Besides which, more than one military genius of a high order was brought to light upon our side. Such were Norris, Williams, and Lord Willoughby, and it is about Lord Willoughby that a ballad, hardly inferior to the "Agincourt," is written, describing how, after fighting with a handful of men against overwhelming odds, he at last vanquished the Spaniards:

"Then courage, noble Englishmen,
And never be dismayed,
If that we be but one to ten
We will not be afraid
To fight with foreign enemies
And set our country free;
And thus I end the bloody bout
Of brave Lord Willoughby."

Raleigh, writing in prison his huge and unfinished history of the world, goes out of his way to show that though the ancient Romans were certainly brave soldiers, their valour was of an inferior stamp to that of Englishmen.

The Dutch war produced one of the earliest of the patriotic ballads, written as many as eight years before the Armada, and exhorting the "buds of Brutus' land" to go forth and spend their blood to do their "Queen and country good." But, as a general rule, the definitely patriotic pieces are produced after the stimulus of the supreme crisis. There is a noble poem in blank verse, written by Peele himself upon the sailing of the Corunna expedition, reminding the captains that:

"You fight for Christ, and England's peerless Queen,
Elizabeth, the wonder of the world,
Over whose throne the enemies of God
Have thundered forth their vain successless braves.
O three-times-treble happy men, that fight
Under the cross of Christ and England's Queen
And follow such as Drake and Norris are!"

We may here, in passing, dispose of the absurd fashion of talking as if anything that can be connected with the Renaissance were necessarily irreligious. This may have been the case in Italy, but in England one cannot fail to be struck with the fervour with which the most brilliant of our heroes were inspired. Drake, as we know by his letters, looked upon himself as chosen by God for his task, and even Essex, perhaps the most courtier-like and undisciplined of them all, was devoutly religious and not far from being a Puritan. Even Raleigh, by no means an ideal or an unworldly character, could go to his death with the ink hardly dry upon the lines :

> " Yet from this grave, this earth, this dust,
> My God shall raise me up, I trust ! "

Worldly and cynical men would have been ill-fitted to bear the brunt of the Counter-Reformation.

But it was not only the upper class that was swept along the tide of enthusiasm. The ballads were not all works of art like " Agincourt " and " Lord Willoughby," but often took the form of crude broadsheets, that occupied much the same place as the cruder popular songs nowadays. The interesting collection of the Shirburn Ballads, recently published, will provide us with illustration. There is one ballad written the year before the Queen died, which contains the lines :

> " Oh let us now return unto the Lord,
> And to His praise sing psalms with one accord
> Which hath defended little England's right
> From foreign foes, their cruelty and might."

Sometimes the theme is the cruelties of the Spaniards as contrasted with our own humanity, a not unjust comparison, even by the admissions of the foe themselves ; now it is the fate of a deserter :

> " a warning to all those
> Who would not fight 'gainst England's foes."

Now it is to sing the praises of the Queen, who had made the biggest ships and the hottest powder and shot that

ever were seen; now it is to lament the death of Essex, who is represented as a patriot and a terror to his country's foes—not a traitor like Campion the Jesuit, and the Earl of Westmorland.

Nor must we forget the group of writers, who represent the bourgeois spirit as opposed to that of the Court. We have seen something of their patriotism in the "three Ladies of London."* We get closer to the heart of the people in the rough work of men like Heywood and Munday, than in the more elaborate productions of the fine gentlemen, with their polite conventions and strange turns of phrase. The seed sown by Marlowe produces a crop of sanguinary melodrama, varying from the tragic intensity of "The Duchess of Malfi," to stuff as florid and unrefined as that which we see advertised every day upon the big, gaudy posters of our own lesser theatres. Then again we have the homely play, dealing with contemporary life, with a strong spice of moral fervour. These plays are for the town what the "Polyolbion" and "Britannia's Pastorals" are for the country, and show how instinct with life and vigour was the spirit of Elizabethan London. But there are other and more distinctively national tendencies at work. We have a long list of more or less romantic plays dealing with the country's past. Munday, a voluminous but mediocre playwright, brings on to the stage Cœur de Lion, Palladine of England, and that other time-honoured national hero, Robin Hood. The very names of his plays, "Palmerin of England," "The Rising of Cardinal Wolsey," "The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon," "A Watchword to England," "Triumphs of Reunited Britannia," show to what an extent he was fired by the new patriotic ardour. Heywood follows upon the same lines in his "Edward IV," not to speak of "The Early Days of Elizabeth"; and to fill up a gap in the long list of English kings, we have an anonymous play, in

1597, which introduces us to Edward III and the glories of Poictiers.

A character very popular with London audiences is that of the healthy, adventurous prentice, the descendant of Jack the Giant-killer, and ancestor of the heroes of Henty and the penny dreadful, the young Englishman who goes through endless adventures in the crusades or on the Spanish Main, and always manages somehow to come through with flying colours. Then, too, we have the character of the jovial and not always very refined mayor, who is mixed up with exalted persons and affairs of State, such men as Dekker's Simon Eyre, and the hero of an early play of Middleton's, Simon, Mayor of Queenborough, a merry old fellow who provides the comic element of a patriotic play, in which the invader Hengist comes to a bad end at the hands of the Britons.

We now come to the " Faerie Queene," a work sufficient by itself to have justified the age that produced it, and which it reflects in its luxuriant profusion, as of a spring hedgerow. Spenser is exuberantly romantic; his works are inspired by conception opposite to the classic austerity, which fashioned a masterpiece of literature as it would a statue, and it differs from the Greek even as Milan Cathdral differs from the Parthenon. Doubtless there is a certain unity in Spenser's original scheme, which might have become more apparent had that scheme been worked to a conclusion ; but in general the impression left is more that of a blossom-starred wilderness, than of a garden.

Indeed, Spenser mirrors the shortcomings as well as the virtues of his age. Lack of control was the besetting sin of the art as well as the action of the Elizabethans, and if some readers have felt Macaulay's difficulty in reading the poem right through, it is due less to its length than its diffuseness. Formally, the working out of the plot is regular enough, with its twelve cantos for each virtue, and the punctual appearance of Prince Arthur in

the seventh; but actually, it is hard to keep pace with the endless digressions of plot and the confusion of characters, albeit the verse is so uniformly beautiful in all its parts as more than to reward the task of unravelling its labyrinthine vagaries.

Spenser was the friend of Sidney, and the difference between the two was what we might expect from the fact that one died before the Armada, and the other accomplished his masterpiece after its defeat. For the machinery of knights errant, shepherds, Greek gods, and Christian virtues is such as would have delighted the heart of Sidney, who was, in life and death, a perfect feudal knight errant. Spenser, however, has soared above the feudal point of view, and his work is tinged with an ardent and whole-hearted love of England, such as not even Shakespeare surpassed. There is a peculiarity about this patriotism of his, which gives us to suspect that had Sidney lived, his work might have followed much the same lines. For the patriotism of Spenser has all the appearance of being grafted from the outside upon the original scheme. The warfare and triumph of the Christian virtues is not different in principle from the machinery of the miracle plays, which concern themselves exclusively with individual life. We do not expect, for instance, to find the triumph of Temperance made the excuse for prophesying the triumph of the British Empire, and it is certain that during the first half of the reign no such idea would have flashed across any poet's imagination; but here lay the great advantage of Spenser's romantic method. He was so little troubled by the necessities of his original scheme, that he could allow himself to diverge from it without any pricking of his literary conscience.

Even in the choosing of his characters, it is evident that Spenser is wholly English in his sympathies. In his preface, he tells Sir Walter Raleigh how he had chosen

the legend of King Arthur as the groundwork of his allegory. His Red-Cross Knight is St. George of England; his invincible hero is Arthur himself, the Briton Prince; his invincible heroine Britomart, who is none other than the virgin Queen. He is deeply read in the legends of his country, and he brings both Guyon and Arthur to the House of Temperance, where the Briton Prince finds "an auncient book, hight Briton moniments," in which is traced, in elaborate detail, the whole of the Brutus legend down to the time of Uther Pendragon.

> " At last, quite ravisht with delight to heare
> The royall Ofspring of his native land,
> Cryde out; Deare country! O! how dearely deare
> Ought thy rememberance and perpetuall band
> Be to thy foster Childe, that from thy hand
> Did commun breath and nouriture receave.
> How brutish is it not to understand
> How much to her we owe, that all us gave;
> That gave unto us all what ever good we have."

In the next book, that of Britomart or Chastity, Spenser takes the opportunity of letting Merlin prophesy to Britomart the future of her country. He chooses the same symbol that tradition had put into the mouth of Edward the Confessor:

> " For so must all things excellent begin,
> And eke enrooted deepe must be that tree
> Whose big embodied branches shall not lin
> Till they to hevens hight forth stretched bee."

After a rapid sketch of our history Merlin comes to a " royall virgin " who shall

> " Stretch her white rod over the Belgick shore
> And the great Castle (Castille) smite so sore withall
> That it shall make him shake and shortly learn to fall."

And the prophecy comes to a close with the solemn and inspired words: " But yet the end is not."

It is in the fifth book that we get the best insight into Spenser's political opinions. In it he treats of Justice,

and Justice with him is the conception of ordered discipline, which had shaped the policy of the Tudors. We must own to a certain distaste for the cold and rather priggish character of the righteous Artegall, champion of Justice; and his squire, Talus, the "iron man" with his flail, devoid of pity or feelings of any kind, is a figure more powerful than pleasing. Artegall is the chosen lover of Britomart, by which we are to understand that Spenser wished to depict Elizabeth as wedded to this stern ideal, though in the character of Mercilla she does, to some very small extent, temper it with mercy, albeit the first object encountered in her palace is some one with his tongue nailed to a post, for writing bad poems about her.

First sheer lawless violence, in the shape of Sanglier, and then corruption in high places, as embodied in the Lady Munera, come in for punishment at the hands of Artegall and Talus. The next enemy is perhaps the most remarkable character in the book, for he is a demagogue giant, who puts forward opinions to his audience that have a strangely modern sound, and which must have been suggested to Spenser by the doctrines of the Anabaptists, and perhaps, less directly, by those of the Calvinists. The giant is, in fact, not only a republican, but a Socialist; he has pushed the dogma of human equality to its logical conclusion; he will level the mountains with the plain and the high rocks with the sea; he will suppress tyrants, curb the lordings who overawe the commons, and give the wealth of rich men to the poor.

This gives the righteous Artegall an opportunity of developing his own theory, which is similar to that of the famous speech of Ulysses in "Troilus and Cressida." He reposes his polity upon the conception of degree, he sees a divine Toryism in the government of the universe, and finds in the sovereignty of God a type of the order

that should prevail among men. He says of God's creatures:

" They live, they die, like as he doth ordaine,
Ne ever any asketh reason why,
The hills doe not the lowly dales disdaine,
The dales doe not the lofty hills envy.
He maketh Kings to sit in sovranty,
He maketh subjects to their powre obay,
He pulleth downe and setteth up on hy;
He gives to this, from that he takes away,
For all we have is his, what he list doe, he may."

No better statement of the Tudor, or indeed, of the pure Tory ideal, could have been made, though the effect of a noble and dignified oration is not enhanced by the way in which Talus, finding the giant still unconvinced, clinches the argument by pitching him over the cliff, a conclusion which it may be noticed moved the indignation of Keats, who wrote a stanza of his own, in which the giant is put together and educated by one Typographus, and subsequently:

" meeting Artegall and Talus grim
The one he stroke stone blind, the other's eyes woxe dim."

In the eighth canto, Arthur, who has entered into league with Artegall, and is at once the Briton Prince and the type of divine grace, overthrows the Souldan, who is Philip II, in single combat. This is an allegory of the Armada: the enemy approaches in a chariot " drawn of cruel steeds," but the champion of England and of all the virtues calmly awaits him " on the green," the green floor of the ocean. After tracing and traversing for some time, like our fleet in the Channel, he flashes his shield in his face, as Howard sent the fireships blazing into Calais Roads, whereupon the horses run away, the chariot is smashed, and the Souldan torn to pieces in the wreckage. Not only are the affairs of England constantly coming into the story, but the introduction of Henry of Navarre's apostasy, and the rebellion of the Netherlands,

testifies to the growing interest aroused by Continental affairs, especially where Philip is concerned.

Mary Queen of Scots is treated throughout with ruthless severity. She is typified by the false Duessa, who is stripped in the first book and put to death in the fifth, Spenser being very careful to lay stress upon Elizabeth's almost superhuman mercy in so much as hesitating about the sentence. Indeed, it cannot be denied that there is something of Talus in Spenser's own character, and it is hard to read without a shudder his deliberate scheme for conquering Ireland by extermination. It was a hard age in which devout men could applaud the Inquisition and the slave trade, the stake for heretics and the whip and brand for the unemployed. It is against such a dark background that the gentleness of Drake on the far seas, and Essex at Cadiz, shows doubly bright. Take it for all in all, Elizabethan England set up a standard of humanity, imperfect though it was, to which neither the Counter-Reformation nor the followers of Calvin could lay claim. Nothing besmirched our scutcheon like the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the four days' public torture of Balthasar Gerard.

The political doctrine, which is expounded by Artegall, is developed at greater length by Richard Hooker, the exponent of the deepest thought and loftiest prose of the Elizabethan age. He founds his Church polity, and incidentally his State polity, upon the same conception of law which the righteous knight has already deduced from the workings of the universe. "Of Law," he says, "there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the

mother of their peace and joy." Spenser, as a poet, had contented himself with visioning the height and ubiquity and divinity of law; Hooker, as a philosopher, must needs analyse it and trace it in all its divers manifestations. He sees God electing to work by His own perfect law; he sees the angels naturally conforming, each in his degree, to that consummate wisdom; he sees the elements blindly impelled by their Maker's behest; and he shows that man, though a sinful and imperfect creature, has the same law, the categorical imperative of a later age, written upon his heart as a standard to which he ought to conform. What the angels do naturally, man must accomplish by his free agency, and hence it is that he is bidden to pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Upon this foundation Hooker builds up the essentially legal framework of a Social Compact. This doctrine has an important bearing upon the question of patriotism, for whatever shape it has taken, it has always recognized, at least formally, the principle of consent. The State exists for the good of all, and not only for that of the sovereign, and in so far as the contract is recognized, the sanction is human as well as divine. "Utterly without our consent," says Hooker, "can we be at the command of no man living."

Here is obviously a doctrine which can be made to serve purposes most repugnant to the Tudor theory of government. In the hands of Languet and the Scotch Calvinists, this had already been accomplished with the most revolutionary effect. But Hooker was to show how this seemingly uncontrollable steed could be curbed and bridled and made to draw the coach of royalty. Something more than consent is required for a true polity, which we can serve and love. Some principle of continuity is also necessary, the Social Compact cannot be a mere temporary arrangement to be dissolved at the caprice

of either party; the State must be a living body, not a chance concourse of atoms. And here we have one of the two main lines of division between exponents of the Social Compact, the other consisting in the diverse views which they have taken of human nature.

We have men like Rousseau, who try to shelve the difficulty altogether, by making the compact one to which every party is continuously a consenting member. At the other extreme we have Hobbes, who would have the supreme power transferred once and for all to the sovereign. Towards this view Hooker inclines. He looks upon the State as a personality, which outlives its human members, and the compact which formed it as not to be dissolved unless it is revoked by universal agreement.

Now we come to the second line of difference. There is one thing still essential for patriotism. A society of egotists, such as those of whom Hobbes would have us believe our race is composed, could be capable of no disinterested passion about anything at all. Society is for them only a matter of convenience. But Hooker takes a less inhuman view. He is largely under the influence of Aristotle, from whom he derives the theory that the State came into being to the end that men might live, but continues to be in order that they may live well. His view of humanity is coloured by that of St. Augustine. It is the nature of man to seek good, but being under the curse of Adam, he often prefers the lesser good to the greater, and hence the need of laws to check his baser impulses and spur him to the fulfilment of his true nature. The State then, like the Church, is of God, and in the frontispiece the King is seen receiving his sceptre from heaven, while the Church receives the Bible.

A fitting symbol, this, of the Elizabethan ideal at its best. Loyalty to the throne, and the loving study of the Bible, were what had raised England out of the Slough of Despair, and placed her for ever among the leading

nations of the world. The direct discipline of the Church had probably counted for little, except as regards her partial success in maintaining the order which Hooker prized before all things. It is perhaps characteristic of Englishmen that it was rather by private study than organized enthusiasm that they had fostered a spirit fit to cope with the Counter-Reformation. As for the importance of religion to a State, by no one is it more emphatically recognized than by Hooker. "So natural is religion with Justice that we may boldly deem that there is neither where both are not." "The same piety which maketh them that are in authority desirous to please and resemble God by justice, inflameth every way men of action with zeal to do good (as far as their place will permit) unto all. For that, they know, is most noble and divine." It is the same as regards courage, only a religious man will have the constancy to fight well, and it may be noted that Hooker takes a very liberal view of religion, granting some measure of it even to peoples who are not Christian. For atheists, he, like Burke, would have no tolerance.

Thus we see that according to Hooker the State is based primarily on the Divine Law, and next upon the consent and welfare of its members; that it is a continuous living whole, made up of men who have the good implanted in their hearts, though by the frailty of their nature they may not always stand upright. His justification of the Church is worked out upon precisely similar lines. It is not till Burke that we again meet with a doctrine so favourable to the united patriotic feeling, whose growth it is the object of this book to trace.

Splendid, almost miraculous, as had been the achievement of Elizabeth's last years, it was yet far short of ideal perfection. Never, perhaps, has any nation undergone a like spiritual development, or bequeathed so much to posterity in so short a span, but there was yet much

to be accomplished, and long and bitter was the training to be undergone before she could take her place as the successor of Rome and the leader of civilization. It was enough, for the nonce, to have broken the shock of the Counter-Reformation and brought the tyrant's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, but to step into the place of Spain was beyond her power; and it was good for a while that it should be so, for the tree that shoots up the fastest is seldom sound within, and not the poplar, but the oak is emblematic of England. These years are from one standpoint a little disheartening, for they show not only the fruition, but the limitations of the Elizabethan age. The bravery of our men, the heroism of our leaders, was displayed again and again. Not for the last time, the Low Countries were to see with what decisive effect a contingent of Englishmen could intervene in the warfare of Continental armies. Prince Maurice, the new deliverer of the Netherlands, advancing to take Nieuport, found his own army cut off and in danger of annihilation at the hands of the redoubtable Spaniards. Some troops had already given way; the liberties of Holland hung upon a thread, but the little English force of Vere was equal to the occasion, and bore the brunt of an action which has justly been compared to Inkermann, until the tardy arrival of reinforcements completed the work, and for the first time before Rocroy, the Spanish infantry were fairly beaten on the open field. We need not do more than mention the exploits of Essex at Cadiz, of Mountjoy and Leveson at Kinsale, of Cumberland at Puerto Rico, to prove that the spirit of Drake had not died with him. But for all this, there was a sustained incapacity to use victories to the best advantage, to advance from defence to attack, and from victory to empire. Spasmodic and ill-concerted were the best efforts to bring Philip to his knees. The treasure fleet, which was afterwards to fall a prey to a Dutchman, eluded all our efforts. Lisbon

remained untaken; Cadiz was taken but not held; a naval base was never established in the West Indies. Dissension too often prevailed between the commanders and indiscipline amongst the fleet; the orders of the Government displayed ignorance of the first principles of strategy, and when Hawkins had ceased to be responsible for the finding of the ships, they, too, showed a falling off from the high standard of the Armada year. The heavy taxes which, despite the best efforts of Elizabeth, had to be imposed to meet the expenses of the war, were borne with growing discontent, and murmurs, ominous of the Long Parliament, were heard all over the country. Finally, the Elizabethans showed scant capacity for empire-building. Raleigh could see visions, golden and prophetic, but his Plantation of Virginia was a failure, and his own hands were not clean. A deeper truth, perchance, than its author realized lay within that solemn prophecy, "But yet the end is not."

# CHAPTER VII

## SHAKESPEARE

THE works of Shakespeare are the quintessence of Elizabethan patriotism. Not the oration of Pericles over the Athenian dead nor the prophecy of Anchises among the shades reveals a nobler intensity of love for the motherland, nor has any poet or orator bodied it, as he did, in such an infinite variety of forms, in prince and soldier and peasant, in a Henry V, in a Brutus, in the ragged mob which followed Cade to London.

Some apology seems necessary for adding to the already immense list of Shakespeare criticisms, the very names of which fill whole volumes of the British Museum catalogue. But we have yet to come across any treatise that deals satisfactorily with this, one of the most important aspects of his work. It is customary to allude in rather vague terms to Shakespeare's patriotism, as if it were a matter of course. Foreign critics find something peculiarly "English" about plays like "Henry V," something crude and almost barbarous, but beyond this they are not wont to go. But Shakespeare's patriotism is something catholic and unique, inconceivable a decade before his time and almost forgotten twenty years after his death, an ideal beyond the scope even of his greatest contemporaries.

Another reason for venturing upon this survey is the almost inconceivable muddle in which, despite the work of Goethe and Schlegel, of Coleridge and Swinburne, the criticism of Shakespeare still remains. The multitude of

books is, unhappily, no criterion of excellence, for unlike science, literary criticism is not necessarily progressive. It behoves each student to tread anew the perilous path that leads beyond knowledge, nor can all the labours of those who have gone before shorten the journey by one foot. No man, it may confidently be affirmed, sees the same Shakespeare as his fellow. According to the depth of his own soul will the depth of the master's work be revealed. Hence it is not paradoxical to maintain that the most edited and most criticized of all authors still goes almost unguessed at, and that of no English poet, not even of Blake, are the ideas that obtain, alike among the few and the many, so vague and so consistently wide of the mark. Men can be found to treat with all seriousness a theory which makes Bacon the author of Shakespeare's plays, and which is about as plausible as the attribution of the "Songs of Innocence" to George III, or of "Paradise Lost" to the Earl of Rochester. Such are the products of Shakespearean criticism after three hundred years of progress!

Lowest in the scale come those laborious and mechanic practitioners, who measure every foot of their native dust to track the flight of the eagle; more numerous, and less worthy our regard are the frankly popular exponents, who, with little reading and less ability, discover that Falstaff was witty and Desdemona pure; a small and envied niche is occupied by a few connoisseurs, not unconnected with the Press, who find a golden path to notoriety by curious and epigrammatic observations, signifying nothing of any particular relevance; some there are, the canaille of letters, who attract a certain amount of desired advertisement by railing accusations, which only their audience take quite seriously; lastly, there are the Swinburnes and Victor Hugos, who mar work of unquestionable genius by violence and lack of discipline, the fault of their own poesy. A concrete example of how

widely even the elect can go astray in their estimate of Shakespeare comes from the leader of the modern so-called Celtic revival, who can commit himself to such statements as: "Shakespeare cared little for the State, the source of all our judgments, apart from its shows and splendours, its turmoils and battles, its flamings out of the uncivilized heart." That such matter can emanate from such a source is only to be explained when we remember how every man sees his own Shakespeare, and that such heroes as Henry V and Brutus are far removed from the graceful and pensive figures, the Naises and Cuchulains, who haunt the shadowy waters and fade away into the land where there is nothing.

We need not go at any length into the discussion as to whether Shakespeare wrote his own plays. This we may leave to the eternal dissension of the erudite, and prefer to adopt without argument the opinion that he was the author of those usually assigned to him, merely touching upon the question of authorship when it arises directly in relation to his patriotism, as in the three parts of "Henry VI." Nor, if we reject the hotch-potch into which sciolism would resolve the earlier plays, must we fall into the opposite error of treating Shakespeare as if he were so far above criticism as to stand out of any relation to the limitations of his age. No man was ever more grandly humble, none more content to profit by influence and suggestion, none so little contemptuous of his fellow-men.

We do not know at what time he left his Warwickshire home, nor when he arrived in town, but it is highly probable that his connection with the stage dates from before the year of the Armada. He would have seen the school of Kyd and Marlowe, those splendid egotists, enjoying its short and boisterous heyday. The glory of the sea dogs, as yet undimmed by the failure of Corunna and the tragedy of Nombre Dios, was on every man's lips. The young poet, as yet barely conscious of his

calling, but drinking in, with a thirst not to be satisfied, every draught of quaint and curious circumstance, would have had ample opportunity for listening to the talk of merchants and seafaring men, and belike have watched the departure and return of the great companies' fleets for lands still fabulous; certainly he would have seen Drake's flagship resting from her three years' voyage at her moorings in the Thames. The spirit of the Renaissance, wafted across the sea from France and Italy, cannot have failed to affect him, and all those influences together must have started him upon his career with no small bias towards the full-blooded and many-hued cult of the individual, which bounded the horizon of his mightiest predecessor.

"Titus Andronicus," the first and worst piece to which Shakespeare put his hand, was probably composed during, or before, the year 1590. And so, as we should naturally expect, we find its author under the influence of Kyd and Marlowe. The play is a chapter of horrors, Barabbas finds his peer in Aaron; there is the same clash of wills as in "Edward II." So well has Shakespeare occasionally caught Marlowe's trick of metre, which was the highest point to which blank verse had as yet attained, that critics have been led, in default of evidence, to assert dogmatically that the authorship of the play was, at least in part, Marlowe's. But "Titus Andronicus" is at once greater and less than any production of the elder dramatist. We never quite catch the thunder and stately march of the "Address to Helen" or the "Death of Guise." But never in Marlowe, nor in any of his peers, do we find lines of such exquisite pathos as:

> "Poor harmless fly!
> That with his pretty buzzing melody
> Came here to make us merry, and thou hast killed him."

More apposite to our purpose is the last scene, where we catch a note of that horror of civil war and passion for

national unity, which hallowed the work of Drayton and Daniel, and which we shall hear all through in Shakespeare :

> " O let me teach you how to knit again
> This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,
> These broken limbs again into one body,
> Lest Rome herself be bane unto herself,
> And she whom mighty kingdoms curtsey to
> Like a forlorn and desperate castaway
> Do shameful execution on herself."

A passage in which we trace the germ of John of Gaunt's fear :

> " That England, that was wont to conquer others,
> Hath made a shameful conquest of herself."

Of such sentiments Marlowe was incapable. A patriot's watchful solicitude for the welfare of the State never troubled his Guises and Tamburlaines. Nor will an attentive ear be slow to detect the first notes of Shakespeare's inimitable Chopinesque sweetness of melody.

Another wind had begun to fill the poet's sails, which, in time, was to waft him quite away from the stormy seas of his apprenticeship. The motley, high-spirited circle in which he was wont to move was disturbed by momentous tidings ; the outraged Majesty of Spain and the Indies was at last roused to action ; such a fleet as the world had never seen was moving, irresistible as fate, up the Channel, the little English ships powerful to annoy, but powerless to check. Almost in sight of our shores lay the terrible Parma ; even now the faggots might be cut that were to burn in one fire with English bodies. Then there was the bustle and ardour of preparation, the train bands lined up at Tilbury, the Queen riding among them with words whose echo we seem to hear in Margaret's rally call in " Henry VI " :

> " Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit
> Should, if a coward hear her speak these words,
> Infuse his breast with magnanimity,
> And make him, naked, foil a man at arms."

Then, when imminent danger forced Englishmen to realize how priceless a treasure was theirs to lose, when love and loyalty had risen to fever-heat, came tidings that the galleons were scudding riddled and defeated, with Drake at their heels, and the storms and rocks ahead. Then was the fearful strain relaxed, and a new-born reverent joy streamed up in thanksgiving to God.

Shakespeare's youth is wrapped in clouds, but here at least we may speak with certainty, for what moved the heart of all England would not have been lost upon the most sensitive of her sons. Of this we have the best of all evidence in the series of historical dramas, whose first composition must have dated from a period almost immediately subsequent to the great victory. This is the tetralogy which begins with the first part of "Henry VI," and ends with "Richard III." Throughout we can trace the development of Shakespeare's art, and there is a world of difference between the gaudy metre of the first play and the subtly modulated blank verse of the last. But from first to last we have a master spirit at work upon a subject worthy his genius, and the four plays form as perfect a dramatic unity as the Orestean Trilogy or the "Ring."

We have read works which tabulate the exact number of lines in "Henry VI" written by Marlowe or another. Such criticism displays less insight than ingenuity. Not only is the plot knit together with a constructive skill beyond Marlowe's capacity, but its whole purpose, so far as we may presume to judge of Shakespeare's purposes, is to show the paradox, the failure, of Marlowe's aimless individualism, and to point a nobler ideal. Unlike anything of Marlowe's, the groundwork of the tragedy is patriotic.

The curtain rises upon Westminster Abbey, where Henry V, the patriot King, is lying in state. Around his

bier are gathered his nobles, lamenting his perished greatness :

> " England ne'er lost a king of so much value "

says Bedford, and Gloucester echoes his lament, while Exeter urges immediate action against the French. Then is heard the first ominous note of the discord which is the theme of the four plays, in a recrimination between Gloucester and Beaufort, while Bedford voices the sentiment which we feel is Shakespeare's :

> " Henry the fifth, thy ghost I invocate,
> Prosper this realm, keep it from civil wars ! "

Vain words ! Hardly are they spoken, when in hurries a messenger with tidings from France of defeat and disaster. Henceforth the shadows darken over England. The powers of selfishness and anarchy reign supreme, and it is not till France is free, and England a slaughter-house, that these powers prove their own destruction, and the way is cleared for a new order.

Yet the patriots, even after their royal leader has been taken from their head, acquit themselves like true Englishmen. Shakespeare could not find it in his heart to let his countrymen get a fair and downright beating from the French. Talbot is as terrible to France as Achilles was to Troy, and the French soldiers go in terror of their enemies. Alençon cries :

> " For none but Samsons and Goliases,
> It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten ! "

But the English have somehow got to be beaten, and so Joan of Arc has to do duty as a witch. This has not unnaturally rankled in the minds of critics, and poor Marlowe, or Kyd, has had to bear the responsibility for an episode which is considered unworthy the creator of a Portia and a Cordelia. But the homage that posterity has worthily accorded to the saint of Domremy was a thing undreamed of in Shakespeare's England. That such beings as witches

did exist was asserted as dogmatically then as it is denied now. Certainly Shakespeare was no disbeliever in it, and it furnished what must have seemed an obvious explanation of events which, whether inspired by divine or infernal agency, must always remain one of the miracles of history. The young playwright merely followed what was the universal opinion of his countrymen in accepting the latter explanation, and whether or not he is to be excused for blackening, in his ignorance, the fame of an heroic girl, need not concern us here. So, at least, did the greatest of French wits in an age of enlightenment.

The form of patriotism which holds one Englishman equal to ten Frenchmen may not be the highest that can be conceived of, but it was one which, as we know in the instance of the *Revenge*, Englishmen of that time were ready to translate into action. Samsons and Goliases were the heroes who went forth for Elizabeth, with an exuberance of speech and manner as spacious and splendid as any line of Marlowe's. Shakespeare could not conceive of the lion-hearted Talbot as a lesser man than Grenville, or the brave Lord Willoughby. But of the faults which rendered that courage vain he treats with no less freedom. The English are handicapped by the selfishness of their leaders, Sir John Fastolfe twice runs away, Talbot himself, the rough, terrible hero, is caught in a trap and killed through the treachery of Somerset. At home the dissensions thicken. The good Duke of Gloucester, the Protector of the realm, is wise and loyal, but he is powerless against such ruffians as Beaufort and Suffolk. The maturity of the King only makes matters worse. Shakespeare here deals with a subtler problem than the failure of the egotist will. In Henry VI he shows how incompetent is mere individual virtue to cope with the difficulties of government. Henry's one thought is for his own soul, and for the souls of others. Instead of commanding he pleads, instead of stamping out rebellion he sends a bishop to

entreat with the rebels, instead of fighting he moralizes on the horrors of war, instead of defending his title against York, he balances pros and cons as if he were at a debating society. He has got a sort of love for his country, but it is so feeble and passive as to be well-nigh useless, and there are few such pathetic touches as where the poor crownless King steals back to have one last look at his native land, only to be taken prisoner by the two keepers. He sees that England may curse his "wretched reign," but he knows not how to make things better.

Under such a sovereign, the condition of the realm naturally goes from bad to worse. Through the agency of Suffolk is consummated the fatal marriage with Margaret, and some of our fairest French provinces are sacrificed; the first mutterings of civil war are heard in the formation of a Yorkist party; the last of the patriots, the Duke of Gloucester, is overwhelmed by the plots of the nobles and foully murdered; Beaufort and Suffolk give place to York and Somerset; the country is naked to the wills of men who care only for themselves.

Then comes Cade's revolt, instigated by York, for along with the degradation of their natural leaders, the masses have grown wild and out of hand. We have already heard the commons clamouring at the palace doors, and it is now the turn of the lowest of the people, mad with grievances they know not how to formulate, and vaguely conscious that the honour of the country has been sold. It has escaped most of Shakespeare's critics to what an extent he understood and sympathized with the better side of a crowd. The boors who follow Cade to London are brought back to their allegiance, in the very hour of their triumph, by an appeal to their patriotism. It is Cade, and not Buckingham, who reminds them of their burdens and slavery to the nobility. But these arguments are of little avail when the Duke makes his appeal in the

name of Henry V, when he warns them of the danger of a French invasion, and exhorts them to

"Spare England, for it is your native coast,"

and unite as one man to fight for God and their King upon the plains of France. The loyalty that can ensure the success of such an appeal is wonderful and pathetic, and the magnates of the play are not so noble as these poor men of Kent.

What follows is the very crown of all the Elizabethan moralizing against civil war. In scene after scene the horrors of disunion are unfolded before us. We see the Duke of York, a really noble nature, carried away and brutalized by ambition, and coolly plotting to raise such a storm in his native land as shall be the death of ten thousand men; his sons, except in their genuine admiration for their father, are each in his own way conscienceless ruffians; in Margaret and Clifford we touch the very lowest depths of human cruelty. An innocent child is murdered callously; to stanch his father's tears a handkerchief is offered him stained in the son's blood; another son is stabbed before his mother's eyes; the poor harmless King is done to death in the Tower. In almost every scene there is a murder, and the horror rises to a climax where, on Towton field, a son kills his father and a father his son, while Henry looks on in helpless, impotent grief. The selfish will, the highest conception to which Marlowe and his school attained, is working out its own and its country's ruin. The breaking-point is reached in the last of the four plays, the tragedy of "Richard III."

A modern playwright, who not obscurely hints that he is capable of bettering Shakespeare's instruction, takes exception to his drama because Shakespeare, as he thinks, could not depict a hero. Now the real hero, as this critic clearly indicates, is the "Superman," who is under no

illusion of duty or patriotism, and in whom the will is developed to its highest possible pitch. Just such a Superman is the hero of Marlowe and the writers of the transition, and in "Richard III" he is depicted so faithfully that the critic is compelled to evade the issue by writing down Richard as "a stage villain who smothers babies and offs with people's heads." He is nothing of the sort. He combines the will of a Moloch with the subtlety and resource of a Belial. True to the ideal of the Superman, he does not acknowledge the moral law that binds ordinary mortals. He has no love of evil for its own sake, but marches to his goal without scruples and without fear, and except in his youth, and in the extreme case of Clifford, he is not cruel nor revengeful. When York hesitates about violating his oath and claiming the crown, Richard, in the true spirit of "Zarathustra," laughs the old tables to scorn, and sweeps his scruples aside. He looks with genuine contempt upon those who allow any moral standard to hamper their wills, he puts people out of his way with as little anger or remorse as he would kill a stag; to him, as to Ibsen, the greatest man is he who stands most alone; to him, as to Nietzsche, the first commandment is to be hard; to him, as to Bernard Shaw, compassion is the fellow-feeling of the unsound, and the golden rule is that there are no golden rules.

How miserably it all fails! With matchless skill Richard advances from point to point. He seeks the fullest scope for his will, now striking with lightning swiftness as at Towton, now, with serpentine grace, acting a lover's part, now, cat-like, creeping silently upon his victims, upon Hastings and Clarence, posing by turn as a saint, as a friend, as a penitent, as a kind uncle, as a loyal brother; fearless in action, unfailing in resource, the embodiment of will-power, he is all the time in the hands of a power greater than his own. Like Napoleon in Russia, every step forward involves

him in greater difficulty. Old Queen Margaret, in a frenzy of inspiration, prophesies the doom in store for one and all of the wicked crew, who have usurped the lordship of England. With an awful and sombre joy, she beholds them fall one by one before the cacodemon, who is the supreme product of an age of selfishness; the House of Lancaster, the House of York, the Woodvilles, Hastings, Buckingham—none of them can deliver his soul from death. So long as a power does not arise to point to a nobler, patriotic ideal, Richard triumphs. Then comes the end, after the powers of evil have concentrated their whole force in Richard's person, with the advent of another King Harry, the "virtuous and holy." There flashes upon Richard what he has never perceived before, that there is a higher law than that of the will, that wickedness is its own destruction. Before his reeling imagination his crimes rise up to reproach him. Then from the hard, lonely Superman there bursts forth a cry more terrible than that of Faustus, for Faustus's Hell was after all something external to himself, a cry more hopeless and final than Dante's inscription over Hell Gate:

> "I shall despair, there is no creature loves me,
> And if I die, no soul shall pity me."

The wheel has turned full circle. The public spirit that died in Henry V rises again in Henry VII, and the closing scene at Bosworth is the counterpart of the first scene in Westminster Abbey.

"England hath long been mad and scarred herself," says the new King, and pronounces the final verdict:

> "Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
> That would reduce these bloody days again,
> And make poor England weep in streams of blood!
> Let them not live to taste this land's increase,
> That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!
> Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives again,
> That she may long live here, God say Amen!"

Thus, if our interpretation be correct, in these four plays Shakespeare has weighed the individualism of his time in the balance, and has found it wanting. They form an organic whole, and no other playwright, least of all Marlowe, could have materially contributed to them. Nor are the facts consciously twisted to preach a sermon. Shakespeare is moral as the truth is moral. With the instinct of an historian, he is able to grasp the essential facts of a situation, and however inaccurate he may be as regards details, in principle he is a seer. His Henry Tudor was indeed a different creature from the fox-visaged miser of reality, his Kentish hinds are liker Jack Straw's following than Jack Cade's, and God's maid is slandered as the Devil's. But he understood the essential truth that feudalism had become rotten by the time of Henry VI, and that the selfishness of high-born anarchs was fraught with ruin to the nation. Thus Shakespeare's moral is the moral of history.

"King John" is one of the earlier plays, as we can see from the frequency of the rhymed couplet, the tendency to euphuism, and the nature of the blank verse, which has not yet quite shaken itself free from the fetters of the self-contained line, nor acquired that easy flow which marks the later plays. There is a play still earlier, which some critics have assigned to Shakespeare, in which John figures as a Protestant hero. In the better-known play, Shakespeare is to be satisfied with no such crude solution. He has to face a problem of some complexity, for the English have again to suffer temporary reverse at the hands of the French, and the idea of his countrymen being beaten in fair and square fight was intolerable to Shakespeare. So it is again through her internal troubles, through her own untrueness to herself, that England suffers shame.

The nobles, indeed, are not the selfish schemers of Henry VI's Court; Salisbury and Pembroke are only driven from

their allegiance by what they believe to be a cowardly murder. The Church, as we might expect from the circumstances of the time, and the nature of the earlier play, appears in a sinister light. Pandulph is one of Shakespeare's masterpieces, he is as unscrupulous as Cardinal Beaufort, but his methods are those of a Jesuit. He stands for the calculating ambition of the Roman Church, even as Peter of Pomfret stands for its grovelling superstition, and the Bastard, who sees that she fights only for her own hand, does not stick at seizing her property. But the Church is a terrible enemy; by her agency John finds his subjects' allegiance drawn away from him; by the hand of one of her monks he meets his death.

John is a character hard to fathom; he has something of Peer Gynt, something of Richard III. He is able, but his ability is marred by the lack of will-power and moral courage, he cannot adjust himself to facts. Now he is hurling reckless defiance at Rome; now he instigates a crime whose folly is hardly exceeded by its wickedness; fits of energy alternate with fits of panic, as where he hands his crown to Pandulph, or abuses Hubert for carrying out his own orders. He amazes the nobles by a second purposeless coronation; he is, in short, a capricious, selfish tyrant. With such a sovereign and such a Church, it is no wonder that we allowed the French to make head. They had been duly beaten when they met our united forces in the field, but with the nation divided against the King, the Dauphin could invade England. Shakespeare is never tired of painting the evils of national disunion.

One thoroughly English type is presented in the person of the Bastard. He is the breezy, careless-hearted man of action, brimming over with health and good-humour, one who loves his country and has a hearty contempt for foreigners. Naturally quick-witted, he is inclined to follow his heart rather than his head, as when he gaily throws away his inheritance or goes off to rob churches

for John, with a schoolboy's recklessness of consequences. Such is the man whom Shakespeare chooses, in this play, for his country's champion. Like Albany in "King Lear," he puts national considerations before private ones, and when Salisbury and Pembroke in horror prepare to join the Dauphin, off goes the Bastard to fight for John. Shakespeare has no more tolerance for foreigners in "King John" than he had in "Henry VI." The French King is a treacherous plotter, and his son would, if he could, have murdered the English lords who joined his cause. Pandulph and Austria are devoid of a redeeming trait.

The causes of disunion have to be removed, and this is only to be done by the death of King John. After that, the position of the foreigner is hopeless, and the Bastard concludes the play by repeating what was, to Shakespeare, the grand lesson of history:

> "Come the three corners of the world in arms
> And we shall shock them; naught shall make us rue
> If England to herself do rest but true."

From John to Richard II the transition is easy. Here, too, our attention is drawn to the evils accruing to the nation from the reign of a bad king; Richard and John have much in common, and most of all their inability to face facts.

Anæmic critics are wont to idolize Richard as a type of what they call the artistic temperament. If he is an artist at all, he is certainly one of no exalted breed, but closely akin to the suburban poetaster nowadays, who turns out only little decadent and "mood" poems. He is always acting a part, but he is so little balanced as to be unable to sustain the same part for five minutes together. He is the slave of his moods, and his moods change with the rapidity of a kaleidoscope. He is destitute alike of moral sense and sense of proportion. If we may borrow from slang, we can sum up Richard's character in the expressive word "waster."

Thus England is no longer in the hands of Superman Crookback or Tyrant John, but of a butterfly King without any sense of responsibility. He begins by making two of his most powerful subjects the victims of his treacherous caprice; in order to produce a pretty stage effect, he goes on recklessly to farm out his realm to tide over a transient emergency. Old John of Gaunt, who has survived from the brave days of Edward III, and loves his country as Chatham and Nelson loved her, sees only too well how she is being ruined. In a dying speech, that ought to be familiar to all Englishmen, he lavishes upon that dear, dear land every term of rapturous love of which Shakespeare's glowing heart could conceive. Romeo, beneath the balcony, did not pour forth his suit with such an abandonment of passion as this greybeard, trembling on the marge of eternity, lavishes upon the land to which his best days have been devoted, and whose ruin he forebodes in the unworthiness of her sovereign. Richard goes off, half frightened, half annoyed, makes a graceful reference to the old patriot's death, and then proceeds to steal his inheritance.

The catastrophe is the inevitable beneficent result of Richard's nature. He is helpless against such an able Philistine as Bolingbroke; while his rival acts, he keeps on posing, and however much we may pity his death, however much we dislike his rival's methods, we feel with the Duke of York, that the new regime is on the whole the better, and that such a king as Richard must end by ruining himself or his country. Thus, as in Richard III we saw the failure of the unbridled selfish will, so in Richard II we are shown that of the quasi-artistic egotism, which is content to ignore facts, morals and patriotism, and to treat life as a game.

Henry IV, the next on our list of kings, is the embodiment of shrewd, cold-blooded kingcraft; such a king would have been the idol of Bacon, and is not unlike his portrait

of Henry VII. He has little poetry in his nature, but his mind at once seizes the immediate practical element in every problem. And yet he, too, after his fashion, is a patriot; he is plunged into grief at the thought of leaving the "sweet soil" of England, and glories in being,

> "Though banished, yet a true-born Englishman."

At the very end of his career, when he has for a moment mistaken the character of his son, his cry is:

> "O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows,
> . . . . . .
> O thou wilt be a wilderness again
> Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants."

In young Harry Hotspur, who so nearly snatches the crown from his head, we see the failure of the noblest of all types of individualism. Hotspur's one ideal is knightly honour, an honour which, though pure and sincere, is entirely a personal matter. He can see nothing wrong in partitioning out England, as Sir Launcelot partitioned France. Noble and attractive though he is, we feel when he falls at Shrewsbury beneath the Prince's sword, that it is the higher ideal which has triumphed.

Mr. Yeats has seen fit to describe Henry V as commonplace. Upon what grounds he bases his judgment, except that it is nowadays too frequently the critic's only function to say something unexpected and bizarre at his victim's expense, it is not easy to say. Because Henry is a patriot like Dante, because, like Homer, he loves the clash of arms, because his sense of the ridiculous attracts him to the company of such a king of humour as Falstaff, is surely little enough reason for treating him as a Philistine. Is it impossible to be an artist without being unpractical and unmanly?

Shakespeare had sympathy for Richard of Bordeaux, but he loved Harry of Monmouth. After depicting so many failures, it seems almost as if he had tried to show to what perfection a monarch could attain. Henry is an

artist, and an artist of a higher type than Richard. In every aspect of life he finds something to interest him, through everything he looks to the universal. Of this, the profound and beautiful words in which he condemns Cambridge, Grey and Scroop are sufficient evidence; for himself he pardons them freely, for their offence against the state they must suffer death; the baseness of their crime seems to him like another fall of man. Before the walls of Harfleur he is able, in a few burning words, to ruffle up the drooping courage of his men, and tarre them on to victory in the name of God, England, Harry and St. George. On the eve of Agincourt he rises to the height of his greatness; far from Hotspur's reckless battle lust, or the crude, buoyant patriotism of the Bastard, he feels himself bowed down under a weight of responsibility hardly to be borne. Unlike the light fancy of Richard II, his imagination pierces through the pomps and shows of royalty to the vastness of the interests depending upon him, the King; and at last reposes upon a higher Power. But in public his demeanour is cheerful and inspiring, he can exchange rough talk with the soldiers, can speak with kindly respect to old Sir Thomas Erpingham, and inspire his nobles with a courage that laughs at odds. Honour indeed he covets, not the selfish gallantry of Hotspur, but an honour which identifies itself with the honour of England. What Shakespeare thought of him will be seen from the chorus at the beginning of the fourth act.

The play is in harmony with the King's character. In every play we have noticed hitherto, Shakespeare has laid his finger upon some element of national weakness. Here we see the resistless might of an England united under a worthy leader. One truth Shakespeare is never weary of repeating—we need fear no danger from abroad as long as our own heart is sound. But his mind outsoars even the ideal of a united England, and looks forward to the time when England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales

shall stand shoulder to shoulder like their representatives at Harfleur. With wonderful insight into the character of each nation, he brings before us as comrades in arms the peppery, voluble Fluellen, with his reverence for the strategy of the ancients; the slow, deliberate Captain Jamie, with his solemn determination to do good service; and the wild, impatient Irishman, Macmorris.

It is curious that even such a critic as George Brandes should scent [illegible] in Henry V. There is plenty of bragging in the French camp, and "Ancient Pistol" is perhaps the best satiric example in literature of the empty, boastful spirit which is the essence of the Jingo. But Henry's spirit is, as we have seen, one of heroic humility. He is fighting in support of what he believes to be a just title, and he solemnly charges the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom he consults upon the subject, to take heed how he awakes the sleeping sword of war. He has, in fact, all a really brave man's horror of bloodshed, though he can be ruthlessly stern when the occasion demands. In peace and in war, Henry V feels himself to be the leader of his people, and the servant of his God.

Three other plays dealing with English history remain to be considered. In these the interest is mainly personal. In "Cymbeline" we again find Shakespeare loth to let his countrymen suffer defeat under any circumstances. The Romans are beaten in a pitched battle, but the ending is weak, because Shakespeare could not deny that the Romans beat the Britons, and he could not allow the Britons not to beat the Romans. So that though Cymbeline submits to peace, we are given to understand that it is peace with honour. Curiously enough, it is here the wicked Queen who rises to the occasion, and hurls back defiance to Rome, like Arthur himself in Malory, in the name of a brave people who thought it shame to brook tribute to a foreigner.

Of "Henry VIII" it is not so easy to treat. We may take it for a certainty that Fletcher wrote part of it. Of the feminine endings to the lines perhaps too much can be made, for they grow more frequent in Shakespeare's work as time goes on, and this is probably the last play to which he put his hand. But what suggests the co-operation of an inferior author is the nature of the plot. To begin with, it is thoroughly incoherent, and in respect of construction, seldom a strong point of the Elizabethan dramatist, Shakespeare was head and shoulders above any of his contemporaries. The idea which runs through it is strangely different from that of the other historical dramas. For the first time, it is frankly individual, the old story of the vicissitudes of fortune and the vanity of human greatness. If the audience can be merry, says the prologue, at the sight of mightiness so quickly meeting with misery, a man might weep upon his wedding day.

It is for this reason that we do not think Shakespeare to have been responsible for the treatment of the theme. The subject of the royal divorce of Henry Tudor, and the breach with Rome, afforded such an opportunity for his patriotic and statesmanlike genius as we can hardly imagine that he would have frittered away in the pageantry of courts and the woes of courtiers. The fortunes of his country were more important to him than those of the Duke or Cardinal, and he would hardly have missed the elements of greatness that lay beneath the coarse exterior of the bluff King, nor failed to realize how vital were the issues at stake. But though he cannot be held responsible for the handling of the subject, there is at least much of the dialogue that bears the stamp of his craftsmanship and his idealism. The liveliest interest centres round the greatness and fall of Wolsey, and it is here that the master touch is most in evidence. The final speech to Cromwell could never have emanated from such a mere craftsman as Fletcher. The story is the old one of the man who

has climbed to the summit of ambition, and found its fairest fruits turn to ashes. It is only when the fabric has collapsed about his ears and he has lost the whole world, that he finds his own soul, and a wisdom impregnable to circumstance. His dying counsel, which is Shakespeare's, is to fling away selfish ambition and

> " Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
> Thy God's and truth's."

Over the crown of Shakespeare's tragic genius, " King Lear," we shall not linger. Before the problems it raises, the mystery of suffering and the pitiful impotence of virtue against the leagued powers of darkness, even Shakespeare recoils, he can only echo the plaint of the psalmist, " Such knowledge is too wonderful and too excellent for me, I cannot attain to it ! " All we have to notice is the action of the good Duke of Albany, who, filled with horror at his wife's wickedness, yet takes arms against Cordelia's French army and crushes Lear's last hope, because the supreme consideration, in his eyes, is the welfare of his country. In the old play virtue is allowed to triumph through the defeat of English Goneril and Regan by the King of Gaul. Such a solution we may be sure was unthinkable to Shakespeare, and this not solely for artistic reasons.

Lear may be said to end the tale of English historical plays, but perhaps, if our survey is to be quite exhaustive, we should include another, which at first sight would seem entirely alien. This, as the reader acquainted with Geoffrey of Monmouth may have guessed, is that most baffling of masterpieces, " Troilus and Cressida." For the English, no less than the Romans, were wont to look upon themselves as being descended from a Trojan refugee, and thus the preference which Shakespeare shows for the Trojans is to be attributed, at least in part, to the same cause that made Virgil weight the scales in favour of the side he regarded as his own. For London, as we know,

was New Troy, and a play written a few years later calls Englishmen the "True Trojans." We find Shakespeare extricating himself from the same dilemma as in Cymbeline, and in the same way. The Trojan champion had to be killed, the Greek poet had settled that once and for all, but Shakespeare could at least explain away the catastrophe as a cowardly murder, and allow the honours of the day and the sympathy of the audience to rest with Hector.

We pass naturally from the English to the Roman plays. There is an affinity between the Roman and the English spirit, while our poets and playwrights have seldom been able to assimilate that of Greece. Shakespeare's Greeks are not among his most successful creations, except when, like Bottom, they do not pretend to have anything Greek about them; such comparatively recent works of art as "Prometheus Unbound" and "Atalanta in Calydon" have no more in common with Æschylus and Euripides, than the Cathedral of Chartres has with the Parthenon. There is a massive thoroughness about such works as the "Colosseum," the "Institutes" of Justinian and the line "Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos," a sense of membership in a conquering race, which could not fail to make its appeal to an English mind, even amid the groping infancy of our empire.

It is with the Roman plays of Shakespeare's friend and rival, Ben Jonson, that comparison naturally suggests itself. On the face of it, it would seem that no man was better qualified than Ben for the task of interpreting the spirit of Old Rome. For he was one of those bluff, burly men who naturally despise as unmanly any too violent outpouring of the passions, and he had a wholesome respect for authority. He has justly been compared to his equally famous namesake, the Doctor. But these qualities are thrown away for the lack of one thing more needful. For while Shakespeare dives to the heart of his

subject, and the vital passions common to Roman and Englishman, Jonson loses himself in pedantries, and allows himself to become the slave, and not the master of his materials.

His "Sejanus" is no more than the history of a Court intrigue. It has few traces of public spirit, or even of any agreeable private trait. There is one passage, spoken by the Senator Aruntius, pitched in a nobler tone. He regrets the decay of the ancient civic virtue:

> "Times, the men,
> The men are not the same, 'tis we are base.
> . . . . . .
> Where is the constant Brutus, that did strike
> So brave a blow into the monster's heart?
> . . . . . .
> There's nothing Roman in us, nothing good,
> Gallant or great."

These words curiously recall those of Cassius in "Julius Cæsar." The speech indeed ends:

> "Brave Cassius was the last of all that race."

If, as rumour has it, Shakespeare had some hand in the first version of "Sejanus," is it not possible that these lines emanate from him?

In "Catiline" we have a subject of more promise, for here we have to deal with a patriot wrestling with imminent public danger, with Cicero, Cato, and Julius Cæsar. But the play is disappointing. Cæsar is an unattractive egotist; Cicero, whose best speech is but a translation of the First Oration against Catiline, is, for the rest, thin and uninspiring; Cato, in the great scene in the Senate, behaves no better than a boor. Unlike the conspirators of Shakespeare, Catiline's gang are urged by motives so sordid, that we cannot feel much interest in their fate. One speech of Cato's, however, has something of the ring of Antony's noble words over Brutus:

> "A brave, bad death!
> If this were honest now, and for his country,
> As 'twas against it, who had e'er fall'n greater?"

In the choruses, especially the one at the end of the second act, we find the patriotic spirit stiffly expressed, but none the less sincere. Thus, though we cannot deny to Jonson a sense of public spirit and public duty, it is held in check by his somewhat impassive temperament, and bowed to the earth beneath a mass of authorities. Shakespeare, with no more original records than a twice-translated "Plutarch," had reproduced, in his Roman trilogy, the spirit of which Jonson only perceives the outer shell. They may be regarded as a direct continuation of his English series, and they contain his final vision of man, considered as a political animal. They constitute a triple sermon on the love he ought to have for his country.

Shakespeare proceeds, not by the creation of faultless examples, but by detecting the flaws of character which turn even a hero's strivings to vanity and ruin.

> "In tragic life, God wot,
> No villain need be, passions weave the plot,
> We are betrayed by what is false within."

With such Olympian fairness has he carried out his task that there have not been wanting critics to identify Shakespeare himself with the very faults of such heroes as Brutus and Coriolanus, as who should depict Œdipus Rex, or Richard Feverel, as the ideal of his creator.

Once we have grasped this essential fact, that the three Roman tragedies are studies in the differing degrees of patriotism, the various stopping-places, as it were, on the face of an unscaled mountain, we shall have the key to their interpretation. This is most manifestly the case as regards "Coriolanus." We have here a Rome already big with the potentiality of her future empire, but marred by a selfishness among her children which prevents them from working together. The problem is the same as that of "Henry VI," but the flaw is more subtle, Beaufort and Somerset, Suffolk and Richard, are characters who

only excite our reprobation; they are, as one of them avows, determined to play the villain. Of none of the characters of "Coriolanus" can this be said for a moment; all of them command our sympathy, some our admiration. The hero himself is of the brood of Hotspur. He is incapable, in word or deed, of aught ignoble. He is an above-man, but in a different sense from Richard III; we may fairly say that while Richard's character would appeal to the middle-class English Nietzschians, Coriolanus would come not far short of Zarathustra's own ideal. It is a pity that though Nietzsche professed his admiration of Brutus, he has, so far as we know, left nothing on record concerning Coriolanus.

Shakespeare's hero is every inch a gentleman, he possesses in overflowing measure all the virtues peculiar to aristocracies. Brave, courtly, generous, modest, he is of a type which, with increasing difficulty, we try to turn out from Eton and Oxford. He has a contempt, which is peculiarly Nietzschian, for those who manifestly fail to realize his standard; a contempt that expresses itself nowadays in such terms as "the great unwashed," "cads," "touts," and "townees" as applied to the lower orders. Coriolanus believes that the people were made to be governed by gentlemen, and with any demagogue or person who ventures to differ from him, he does not condescend to argue.

If the popular idea about Shakespeare be correct, that he was such an uncompromising oligarch or snob as to be blind to any but the upper-class point of view, here was surely an opportunity for vindicating it in the person of Coriolanus. But this is just what he refuses to do. That which is weak and fatal in the hero's character is exposed with ruthless impartiality, and when he lies, cut off in his prime in a foreign land, with his meaner rival standing on his body, we feel that this is the result, not of his misfortune, but of his guilt.

For in truth Coriolanus was incapable of rising above the limits of his own egotism. Before the catastrophe of his banishment he had talked of loving Rome, and so, no doubt, he did, after his fashion, but this was not enough. Rome was never all in all to him; his service to her was conditional; she divided his love with the patrician caste and the honour of Coriolanus. Had he been a true Roman, he would not have reserved his love for one class only, he would not have mocked at the pangs of hunger, nor talked of making a heap of plebeian corpses as high as he could prick his lance. Nowadays, during some big labour dispute or parliamentary struggle, you may hear rich people and journalists, without one spark of his heroism, using just such language as Coriolanus. One of the citizens puts the case fairly, by telling him that he has deserved nobly of his country by being a scourge to her enemies and a rod to her friends—" You have not, indeed, loved the common people."

The patriotism of Coriolanus is by and by revealed for the thing it is. He reaps what he has sown, injustice for injustice, insult for insult, and in face of such a trial, all his love for Rome is shrivelled up by pride. He becomes a traitor, for he can be neither a good Roman nor good Volsce. If he is moved from his purpose of destroying the city, it is by an impulse noble indeed, but personal rather than patriotic. He drifts about like a rudderless ship, he spares Rome, yet glories in her shame, and when his own headlong pride at last hurls him to destruction, his death is a merciful release from a world in which his being has lost its roots, upon whose face he is a wanderer and a citiless man, self-doomed to perpetual exile.

So much for the greatest of the Romans, but what of Rome herself? The same fault, pervading in a greater or less degree each grade of her citizens, brings her to the brink of destruction. Bias, or carelessness, has accused

Shakespeare of caricaturing the people and their tribunes, but it is not so. The citizens are undisciplined and uneducated, but on the whole shrewd, good-hearted fellows, capable of responding to proper leadership in the field, and ready afterwards to forget their undoubted wrongs in the deserts of their general. As for Brutus and Sicinius, we fail to understand in what respect any modern demagogue is entitled to cavil at them. They are far from contemptible, and are capable of behaving with dignity and resource when the supreme danger is upon them. They certainly have not the distinctive virtues of gentlemen, they are pompous and fussy, they are unchivalrous enough to insult a defeated adversary, they oppose the lion's strength with the cunning of the fox. But if we place democracy above patriotism, as is avowedly done by many extreme champions of the masses, the conduct of the two tribunes must appear not only capable of defence, but even admirable. They have been appointed champions of the popular cause, as the result of a successful struggle with an insolent aristocracy. No doubt if Coriolanus is elected Consul, the hard-won rights of the poor will be trampled in the dust, and the lot of the plebeians will be worse than ever. He hardly deigns to mask, even as a candidate, his hatred for the people. Such a disaster as his election must be prevented at all costs, and herein the tribunes, from the popular but not from the Roman point of view, are doing no more than their duty towards their constituents, and that with skill and even moderation, for do not they waive their demand for their enemy's death when he is no longer dangerous? They have a genuine ideal of social reform. Sicinius takes a natural pride in the fact that owing to his policy the people are no longer terrorized, but secure and prosperous:

> "Our tradesmen singing in their shops, and going
> About their functions friendly. . . ."

Their methods are purity itself compared with those of the average modern politician, just and merciful beside those of the parliamentary champions who did to death Strafford and Laud.

Only by realizing that these tribunes and citizens are not caricatures, but good average specimens of the crowd and their political leaders, can we understand in what their failure consists. They are tainted with the same fault as their opponents, they are unable to look beyond the welfare of their class to that of Rome. They are, in a modern phrase, worthy politicians of the village pump, and in their shortsighted enthusiasm for the betterment of the plebs, they came within an ace of involving classes and masses in a common destruction. Nor are the senatorial party much to be preferred; they are personally brave, but devoid of imagination; they despise their fellow-citizens too much to assume their proper functions of sympathetic leadership; even in their own cause they are weak-kneed without being generous, and in the hour of peril they show even less presence of mind than the despised tribunes. The saviour of Rome is not Lartius nor Cominius, but Volumnia. She, indeed, has shared the faults of her class, and woman-like, has urged her son deliberately to cozen and bamboozle the people in order to win their votes. But these faults are purged away in the hour of need. Her appeal to her son is one of burning patriotism, and his stubborn pride is swept away like driftwood down a torrent. Petty and sordid seem his honour and his revenge under the pure light of her rebuke; he, the man of iron and mirror of chivalry, stands exposed now in all his naked shame as the would-be murderer of his country. After this, what is left for him but to go back as best he may with Aufidius, and pay the penalty of his double treason? Tried, and found wanting, for him only the refuge of the tomb remains.

The problem of "Julius Cæsar" is more stupendous than that of "Coriolanus." There we saw Rome in the first vigour of her youth, now she has become unquestioned mistress of the world, and has outgrown the institutions which served her so well during her rise. The mighty leader who has stretched his arm in conquest over East and West, has returned in triumph to provide, in his own person, an emperor for her empire. We must clear away a misconception, which has befogged too many criticisms of this play. Shakespeare, it is said, made a hero of Brutus, and for that reason deliberately belittled Cæsar. Such critics are obviously suffering from the fault of Cassius. They, with their valet's eyes, expect to find no hero but the flawless and infallible creature of the melodrama. He must move among men in the fixed orbit of a star, frailty and sin are alien to his nature, he does not know fear, he has no temptation to fall below the heroic level. It would be ill to suspect the greatest of all seers into human nature of deferring to the ideals of housemaids. His task is the less obvious one of probing the soul even of a Cæsar, to find out that ultimate and vital flaw which by and by involves all in ruin. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," are words that ought to be inscribed, in letters of iron, over the tragedy of Julius Cæsar.

For in truth Shakespeare has done his hero no wrong. With all his faults, he towers easily above Brutus and Antony and every other character in the play. His speeches have an innate grandeur, a spaciousness and finality about them, such as we meet with in no other character in all the plays, not even in "Henry V." "What touches us ourselves shall be last served," simple as the words are, bewrays the real Cæsar. Nor is his intellect unworthy of his heart, and Shakespeare never displays a more exact insight into character than when he makes him read through and through the envious spirit caged up in the

form of Cassius, a problem which had baffled even Antony. From the other persons of the drama he extorts confession of his pre-eminence, in coin of praise from Brutus and Antony, of envy from lesser men. Shakespeare meant him to appear what he is:

> " the noblest man
> That ever lived in the tide of times."

Any other conception of his nature destroys the pity and terror of the play.

The demon that possessed Coriolanus had crept also into the heart of Cæsar. In the last hour, when all lay at his feet, he was found unworthy to do more than ascend the Pisgah of Empire. His work could never be destroyed, but he himself was not allowed to set foot in the promised land. His very success had poisoned the wells of his greatness, the hero had ceased to be a Roman or even a mortal man, he had taken upon himself the rôle of a god. Like Napoleon in his latter years, his very victories made him believe himself invincible, and he was too confident in his star to take precautions. His pride, which cut him off from his duty and his fatherland, had left him in a fearful isolation, the loneliness of the above-man, which lies on the frontiers of insanity. It was in such a mood that the Cæsar of modern times could order the advance from Smolensk to Moscow, and leave his bravest veterans cooped up in the Elbe fortresses. It was in such a mood that Shakespeare's Cæsar could read the character of his enemy, and place himself, helpless, in that enemy's power.

Poised in the clouds, or rather suspended, like Socrates in the play, in some pitiful contrivance of human wickerwork, he has lost his sense of proportion, and as Brutus truly divines, scorns the base degrees by which he has ascended. " He is superstitious grown of late," like the Wallenstein of Schiller, another lonely demigod, and like Napoleon. Some support a man must have, and if not in the fellowship of his kind, then in the inscrutable silence

of the stars. Shakespeare's divine pity for men is never more tenderly displayed than in the touches by which, even in the full blaze of his hero's magnificence, we are reminded on how frail a tenure it reposes. Even before the blare of his trumpets and the mob's applause, we hear the first mutterings of conspiracy, we see the imperial throne being undermined. But while we, in the audience, can watch the toils closing round their victim, while we almost long to cry out the warning that Artemidorus never delivers, the man who would be a god is blinded by the light of his own halo; Cæsar has become the dupe of Cæsarism, and rises to the height of his illusion with that blasphemy, "Hence, wilt thou lift up Olympus?" A score of poniards imprint the answer upon a mortal body. Then the veil is rent asunder, and in one moment of terrible realization the true Cæsar faces his murderers, and the mighty heart bursts in a single cry of almost superhuman agony, "Et tu Brute! Then fall Cæsar." Then indeed his spirit, purified and absolved, rises, even from the base of Pompey's statua, in immortal triumph above the slayers of his body. His work yet lives, and the Olympus of the Roman Empire no man shall lift up.

In Cæsar, then, we have the hero statesman, the man born to save his country, turned aside and losing his life, but not his immortality, through making himself an idol. His sin lies in a defect of patriotism none the less real, because it is not immediately obvious. But what shall we say of Brutus, the man who adored Rome with all his heart, whose pride it was to be his country's friend, who was an angel to Cæsar, and by the admission of his mortal foe "the noblest Roman of them all"? In what respect could the patriotism of such a man be found wanting? That there is some vital defect in it we feel, even before we can formulate our reasons. Cæsar's angel is so obviously the smaller man of the two, the very faults of the one are grander than the virtues of the other.

The pride of Cæsar flares up in forms of wild magnificence, that of Brutus shuns the light, and skulks in the darkest and deepest recesses of his soul. It is that most insidious of defects, that last infirmity of noble minds, which is called spiritual pride.

There is more than a superficial resemblance between Brutus and that other incorruptible statesman, whose name is as odious to our own age as that of Brutus himself was to Dante. Both commit murder by theory, both are consciously used as figureheads by the Cassiuses and Collots of practical politics, both can inspire devotion to the death among their followers and love in their homes, both are above the suspicion of having a price. There is more than a superficial resemblance between the methods of facing supreme crises, Brutus in the Forum, Robespierre in the Convention. Each has a pathetic confidence in his ability to bear down opposition, by reading a lecture to an excited crowd. The comparison may not be pushed to an extreme, for Brutus is beyond doubt the nobler figure of the two, but it gives us the key to his failure as a statesman and a patriot. He is obsessed, not like Cæsar by his own greatness, but by his own virtue. He feels himself the hereditary champion of the republican theory, " My ancestor did from the streets of Rome the Tarquin drive," and the most potent of all the seductions of Cassius is that nameless message, so exquisitely calculated to tickle his vanity, " Brutus, thou sleepest, awake ! " placed, by a refinement of art, on his ancestor's statue. Thus he allows his spiritual pride to harden round him like a shell, and while he talks of loving Rome he is more in love with his theories and himself. He becomes a sophist and a prig, marching through pedantry to crime, the assassin of his friend, the scourge of his country and the ruin even of his own faction.

In spite of all, the Cæsarian ideal triumphs. No sooner is the life out of the hero's body, than the whole pitiful

sham of " liberty, freedom and enfranchisement " is laid bare. The conspirators bargaining for the disposal of new dignities, the citizens clamouring for King Brutus, the liberators riding for their lives through the streets of Rome, the triumvirs pricking down the flower of the nobility, and all to put the young Octavius upon the throne of his uncle! Even with his grievous fault so grievously answered, Julius Cæsar was the one man capable of bringing order where chaos had reigned, and of transforming that city of selfish senators and irresponsible citizens into the capital of the world. Against this work Brutus and all his theories are powerless, and as the clouds thicken around him, he, too, has to undergo the purification of reality. A sombre and menacing phantom haunts his path to the tomb, till he too is made conscious of his error, and humbly accepting his fall, cries aloud :

> " O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
> Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords
> In our own proper entrails."

The character of Mark Antony is one that need not detain us long, for though it is traced with a no less masterly hand than those of Cæsar and Brutus, the causes of his failure are so much more easy to detect. Antony is not the victim of his pride, but of his moral unfitness. He is no vulgar sensualist, and the self-righteous Brutus has abundant reason to repent his mistake in despising the power of a masker and a reveller. Next to Cæsar himself, he is the ablest intellect in the two plays. But even from the first he betrays the essential instability of his character. He adores Cæsar, and yet he can do no more than pander, by abject subservience, to his leader's most dangerous weakness. As Brutus had flaunted his virtue, so Antony rather prides himself on his unscrupulousness, and even after his triumph in the Forum seeks to relieve the strain on his overwrought feelings, by dropping for a moment into the

fleering vein. But it needed no ordinary temptation to seduce the war-hardened and generous veteran from his true destiny. Shakespeare created his tragic figures the supreme examples of their kind. It needed the conquest of the world to inflame the pride of Cæsar, the crumbling of the republic to try the virtue of Brutus; and to entrap the genius of Antony, Shakespeare devised such a snare as might have moved the envy of Mephistopheles. He took the dust of Plutarch and made Cleopatra.

In this Roman trilogy Shakespeare has embodied his ripest experience on the subject of patriotism. In the English series he had declared, once and for all, his allegiance to the national ideal, and in the character of Henry V he had shown how the crown of heroism sits fairest on those who serve the motherland. In the Roman plays this is taken for granted, and we learn how hard it is even for a hero to serve his country truly.

His conception of the State is rooted in a profounder philosophy than that of Spenser or Hooker, though it develops what is best in their doctrines. It is neither a compact nor a balance of power, but a soul and a harmony. When Shakespeare comes to expound through the mouth of Ulysses his ideal of a social hierarchy, it is to musical imagery that he instinctively turns:

> "Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark what discord follows."

Herein is the essence of Hooker's idea of law and Artegall's of justice, but the one seems by comparison cold and formal, and Spenser is never without the veneer of class prejudice.

It is necessary to the understanding of Shakespeare that we do not pervert the teaching of his plays to the meaner ends of factions and individuals. No charge has been more freely levelled against him than that he despised the masses, that he fell in with the spirit of the Court so far as to pander to the tyranny and snobbishness

of the few. Nothing can be wider of the truth. We admit freely that he had scant sympathy with abstract doctrines, based upon the rights of man, because he could not conceive of any man being free, except when he was fulfilling his duty in his appointed post in the social army. He was not interested in Magna Carta, nor was he much taken by the republican theorizing of Brutus. Moreover, he was out of touch with that peculiarly catholic equality, which humbles Chaucer's knight to fellowship with the ploughman and the miller. The classes in Shakespeare move in their own orbits, even though devotion and tenderness may subsist between them.

This is involved in the central doctrine of degree, but it is a different thing from despising those who occupy the lower grades of the ladder. No student of the plays can accuse their author of imperfect sympathy with the poor. The most admirable of all the English kings is he who delights to mix freely, and in disguise, with the common soldiers. In "Lear," which is the masterpiece of all, the supreme passage is that in which the distracted and clairvoyant wits of the old King discover the essential human kinship which binds the highest to the lowest. Never has the brotherhood of man been vindicated with more uncompromising directness. Nor was Shakespeare enamoured of the tenets of divine right, which were the glory and bane of the Stuart line. Indeed, he treats such pretensions with a sarcasm none the less withering because it is implied. There are two passages in which the divine right is upheld with an eloquence that might seem to carry conviction. But one of these is put into the mouth of Richard II, one into that of King Claudius, while Richard III is allowed to silence the reproaches of the widow he has made childless by his ejaculation of outraged piety:

> "Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women
> Rail on the Lord's anointed!"

And yet, if Shakespeare has little sympathy with the divine right of kings to do whatever they like, it is not because his philosophy is untinged with mystery. His reverence flies up to the State itself, rather than to any individual, and the spirit which the Cambridge modern historian censures in Burke finds expression in the words of Ulysses :

> " There is a mystery (with whom relation
> Durst never meddle) in the soul of State ;
> Which hath an operation more divine
> Than breath or pen can give expression to."

This is characteristic of Shakespeare, and it is his habit of regarding affairs of State as no less important, for the purposes of the drama, than those of individuals, which distinguishes him from the majority of dramatists, and especially from his predecessors of Marlowe's school, and the courtly favourites who succeeded him.

He may be regarded as the last and greatest exponent of the Tudor ideal, or the first and greatest of the Tories. He does not ask how the maximum amount of freedom may be secured, or how the rights of man may be maintained and balanced, but how the community is to remain true to herself, how best she can perform the functions appointed her by God, or, in other words, justify her existence. For this end it is necessary that every man should have his appointed place, or degree, and that having it, he should devote himself utterly to fulfilling his part therein. Nelson's last signal would be no bad summary of Shakespeare's social philosophy. The saintliness of a Henry VI, the virtue of a Brutus, the chivalry of a Hotspur, are as dross and of less than no account, if they are without patriotism. For what is patriotism but love ; love that suffereth long and is kind ; love that envieth not, vaunteth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things ?

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DECLINE OF THE TUDOR SYSTEM

IT is characteristic of our history, that each period of spiritual energy and conspicuous national activity has been followed by a corresponding reaction, during which men's eyes have been turned principally to home affairs, and our power and prestige abroad have suffered eclipse. This was the case after the patriotic revival of the fourteenth century, it was so after the Seven Years' War, and after Waterloo. The cause of this rhythm of energy and decline is not far to seek. The life of any people is a record of creative activity. A nation can no more stand still than a bicycle, it is its very movement which keeps it from falling. Here is the fallacy of all Utopias. Their authors seem to imagine that, given an ideal set of laws or distribution of property, the Utopians can go on being happy and prosperous for ever and ever. But no laws can keep white and glowing the fire of creative human energy, and once this is allowed to cool, all is lost.

Let us consider the glorious instance of Elizabethan England. We know how long it had taken to awaken the fiery energy of the Queen's last years, how many and momentous were the circumstances that called it forth. The fervour of the Reformation, the fearful experience of Mary's reign, the dangers through which we had passed, as if by a miracle, unscathed, the crowning triumph over the Armada, were the fuel by which it was sustained.

When this was burnt away, it was not likely that the supply would be continuously renewed in such profusion. Already the mighty actors had begun to pass from the stage, and lesser men came in their stead. And now the weak spots in the Tudor armour began to be manifest. For during one of the poetic periods of a nation's history, so abounding is the life of the community as to cloak in a glowing raiment almost any weakness. Such criminal madness as Grenville's becomes more glorious than victory, when it is expiated by such a fight as that of the *Revenge*. Such unscrupulousness as Raleigh's is forgotten in his heroism.

But when the fire is no longer nourished by danger, when men have ceased to loom large upon the stage of history, every weakness becomes apparent, because there is no longer the energy to succeed in spite of it. Then comes one of two things; either the nation makes the hopeless attempt to live upon its past and goes spiritually bankrupt, like Spain; or, like England, it sets about overhauling the old system, and develops new virtues to meet new conditions. To succeed in so doing without swerving from the line of development, and by maintaining the spirit of institutions through every change of form, is what constitutes the strength of nations. For the creative energy does not work by violent breaks, nor by fits and starts, but preserves, through darkness and turmoil, the constant direction of its way. We are true to the past, not by the imitation of its forms, but by the resurrection of its spirit.

We have hitherto had little enough to say about the weak points in the Elizabethan regime, but a keen eye will not have failed to divine some of the tares, that grew unweeded among that splendid crop. Let us take the most conspicuous case of all, the one which we criticize at the greatest peril, and ask what element of weakness lay hidden beneath the genius of Shakespeare.

In his soul was stored what was probably the greatest amount of creative energy, " fine frenzy " as he himself put it, that has ever informed one human personality. Whatever he put his hand to was so transformed and illumined by his genius, that we no more think of its limitations than we care to fix our gaze on a sunspot in the full blaze of the tropic noon. We know that it is miraculously good, and are thankful.

We shall perhaps approach the problem best by asking whether there was any field of human activity with which Shakespeare does not concern himself. The mere framing of such a question is sufficient tribute to the greatness of its subject. Comparison of his work with that of Dante, or Æschylus, or the first Isaiah, will suggest at least one department in which he fell short of their supremacy. To their deeper manifestations of religious feeling he was a stranger. His kingdom was of this world, and though nothing human was strange to him, he concerned himself little with the divine. The Beatrice of the " Paradiso," the chained Titan of the Caucasus, were figures he could never have limned. He could depict the love of a Juliet, but not that of a Theresa; he understood the doubts of Hamlet, but not the certainty of St. Francis. Even the Devil of Milton was hardly within his scope, nor the cosmic brevity of " Doth Job serve God for naught ? "

It is remarkable to what an extent his drama concerns itself primarily with the actions, and not the souls of the characters. He never traces out the development of a soul, like that of Faust, or the Prometheus, of whose ultimate reconciliation with Zeus we are left, alas, with but fragmentary hints. Nor does he give us Richard Feverels or Nora Helmers, though his sonnets contain the subtlest account of the unfolding of his own spirit. Where we do trace development in his works, it is generally in men of action like Henry V and Richard III—but

observe the contrast with a modern seer of character—Richard Feverel comes through his ordeal with a purged soul, Henry V with the crown of France on his brows; Sir Willoughby Patterne's egotism is unmasked before the reader, Angelo has his crime found out by the Duke. The subtlest piece of mental analysis put into the mouth of any of Shakespeare's characters ends with the practical conclusion, "Such men are dangerous." Perhaps the two most obvious exceptions are those of Hamlet and Lear, but the old King's ordeal, though it develops a terrible insight under the influence of madness, ends in breaking his soul rather than purging it, while the main interest of Hamlet lies in his unfitness for a definite task. His soul is torn asunder, but it is not reconciled—the rest is silence. A very stupid schoolboy displayed more wisdom than he knew when he wrote, in answer to a question, that "the plot of Hamlet was to kill the King."

Again, we are never far, in Shakespeare, from that indiscipline which marked, in the field of action, the careers of the greatest Elizabethans. Voltaire was no doubt monstrously unfair when he spoke of Shakespeare as a drunken barbarian, but he was right in his perception of a clean-cut unity of action about the drama of Racine, which was not present in any play of Shakespeare's, with the possible exception of "Julius Cæsar." In the greater plays, his genius is such as to make the very hint of discipline seem an impertinence, and so no doubt it is, if it is suggested by way of disparagement, for we would not rob the mountain of its ruggedness. But while we wonder at the cataract of imagery, we sometimes half tremble to think how the slightest cooling of the inspiration would suffice to turn this miracle to rant and bombast. It is like watching the operations of an army, the troops of which are such born fighting-men as to supersede the necessity for drill or training. Such a

method might succeed in the hands of a Shakespeare, but to the rest of mankind, who lacked his vital energy, it was very perilous.

The limitations over which Shakespeare triumphed were those of his age, though for a few years the genius of the age triumphed over them hardly less gloriously than he. It was inevitable that such defects should exist, for the training which England had received under the Tudors had its own limitations. By firm government and often by ruthless severity, it had welded the nation together, but it had no power over the sources of religious enthusiasm, even as a sergeant may drill a regiment of desperadoes into first-class fighting material, but has neither the will nor the ability to control their native ruffianism. Elizabeth had inherited the system of her father, and was in her own eyes, and by the law of the land, not only the Queen, but the spiritual mother of her people. With all her merits, there was little of the enthusiast in her disposition, and she aimed not at fostering the spirit of the Reformation, but at maintaining an orderly and manageable clergy entirely under her own control. Her ideal of episcopal virtue was found in respectable Archbishop Parker, and she ruined his successor because he tried to put some life into the service of the Church.

We have no wave of religious enthusiasm corresponding to that which buoyed up the mystics of Spain or Italy. The greatest of all the Elizabethan divines based his system of Church Polity not primarily upon the foundation of love, but upon that of law. Manifestations of a deeper feeling, though certainly not lacking, were isolated and sporadic among the governing class. There was the devout, sailor-like piety of Drake, and the luxurious Puritanism of Essex, but the atmosphere of the Court was not favourable to the mystic or the enthusiast, and the Leicesters and the Burleighs were able to preserve

the decent forms of Christianity, without allowing it any unreasonable influence upon their lives.

Such as it was, the Church had at least the advantage of being thoroughly in touch with national feeling. The first whispers of the Laudian revival had not made themselves heard, and the Church of England was associated, in the popular imagination, with the revolt from Rome, and resistance to slavery and the Inquisition. Elizabeth herself, though a lover of ceremony, was an opportunist in matters of dogma, as she evinced by her famous hedging rhyme about the Sacrament; her persecution of the Puritans was essentially political, they refused to fall in with her idea of law, and the ecclesiastical systems of Calvin and Knox smacked of disloyalty. But she gave her full confidence to Archbishop Whitgift, who forced upon the English clergy doctrinal tenets that might have satisfied Calvin himself.

The lack of discipline that pervaded all classes was not unconnected with the state of the Church. Since the Roman system had been rooted out, little control had been exercised by the pastors over their flocks, and a state of moral anarchy was more or less inevitable. The Church Service cannot have been inspiring when the majority of parsons were illiterate and apathetic, and droned the dull official homilies by way of sermons. During the Queen's reign the pressure from without sufficed to hold the nation together, but when this was relaxed the moral atmosphere became rapidly worse, and the Church was ill-fitted to make things better. We learn from Baxter's autobiography, how any one who made the least attempt to lead a Christian life rendered himself liable to be branded with the opprobrious epithet "Puritan." Nor had the experiences of the great war exercised an altogether salutary effect upon some of those who had gone to sea to make what profit they could out of their enemy's commerce.

Ward, who was to earn a sinister fame as a Barbary pirate, complained, upon the conclusion of peace, that the good times were gone when one could sing, swear, drab and kill men as easily as your caremakers do flies; when the whole sea was our empire where we robbed at will, and the world our garden where we walked for sport. This was in the true spirit of Marlowe, and it is evident, from the ready hearing that Ward got from his shipmates, that there must have been a good deal of this spirit about.

Not that England was naturally rotten, far from it, for the system of the Tudors had done glorious work; but its very success had diminished the need for it. Its task was accomplished, and what remained to be done was beyond its scope. Henceforth it gradually loses touch with the spirit of the nation. It had planted the Reformation, but it could not reap its fruits. The men to whom the new-won gospel was all in all, who yearned to commune face to face with their God, and to whom all ceremonies were so much muddy glass blurring the white light of eternity, thirsted for something which the frigid and courtly Church of England could not supply. Already were heard the first stirrings of that many-voiced movement, to which we apply the comprehensive term "Puritan." A Presbyterian congregation was actually formed and suppressed in London; the Marprelate Tracts appeared; Greenwood and Barrow suffered martyrdom. Even the Queen was losing the sympathy of her subjects, and many there were who hailed the accession of James with rejoicing. The new influence was especially manifest in Parliament, where the middle class found a voice, and it was only by Elizabeth's tact that a serious deadlock was averted over the question of monopolies.

It must have been evident to any shrewd observer that the new ruler would need the utmost patience and sympathy, if he were to guide the nation through its

period of transition. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the new King was one of the worst possible men, whom the lottery of succession could have placed upon the throne. He has therefore to bear a great deal of unfair criticism. For the vulgar notion that he was a ridiculous old fool, is about as wide of the mark as his own too rosy conception of his abilities. In natural shrewdness he was much above the average, and he was, perhaps, the most erudite sovereign, who ever sat upon an English throne.

Had he found his proper place in life, and occupied a chair at a university instead of a throne, he would probably have achieved merited distinction in his own special department, and a not unenvied notoriety as a "character." But England, and especially an England fresh from the defeat of Spain, was no place to be governed by a college don. For James was possessed of all the most unfortunate qualities that are fostered by academic life. He was, in the worst sense, a man of theory, and his theories were a prepared mould into which the facts had to be fitted. He had to deal with men of flesh and blood, and he only saw abstractions. In this respect he is not unlike Meredith's Sir Austin Feverel, who could be wise and even profound in his "Pilgrim's Scrip," but who was worse than a failure when he sought to apply his maxims to life.

James had another defect, not in the intellectual but in the moral sphere. He was entirely lacking in nobility; a more unkingly king it would have been impossible to imagine. He was both slovenly and foul-mouthed, now he would be shedding undignified tears, now indulging in still more undignified buffoonery. Now he would be telling his Parliament that he was a god and not answerable to men; now he would defend the same prerogative by reminding them of the fate of the cow who cut off her tail, the Parliament being the cow, and divine prerogative the tail. He was always being led by the nose by some

scheming or worthless favourite, often with no better recommendation than a handsome face.

When such a favourite was a Spanish ambassador, the thing was a public danger; when he was the co-respondent in a divorce case, who was subsequently convicted of murder, it was a scandal; and when the King could compare the upstart Villiers to St. John and himself to Christ, the most infatuated Royalist could hardly fail to perceive the *reductio ad absurdum* of divine right. It was a drawback, too, that the King of England was not an Englishman, that he spoke with a Scottish accent and surrounded himself with Scottish favourites. The prejudice of centuries was not to be extinguished by a union of crowns.

Before he came to England the royal Sir Austin had compiled his "Pilgrim's Scrip," in the form of a treatise for his son, which he called "The Basilikon Doron," or Royal Gift. It is excellent and no doubt profitable reading, full of shrewd and sententious maxims. "God gives not kings the style of gods in vain," James had written in an introductory sonnet, and his conception of kingship is a high one. He distinguishes between a good king and a tyrant; he recognizes a responsibility of the king to God, no less than that of the subject to his king, and he perceives that though rebellion is always unlawful, lawless sovereigns are, as a matter of fact, apt to come to a bad end at the hands of their subjects. James' notion of kingship was, in principle, that propounded by Bossuet at the Court of the Grand Monarch, except that James' was the more democratic. He alludes proudly to his grandfather's title of "the people's King."

But James was without the sense of reality, and his theories were not fit to penetrate beyond the walls of the study. He was of the same stuff as those worthy pedagogues who spill ink in the name of "political science," only he would not have called it "science" but "king-

craft." In his view the King was to manage his people like pieces on a chess-board, upon principles for the most part fixed and ascertainable. It was a theory well suited to his unimaginative cast of mind. To enter, by sympathy, into the emotions of his people, to identify himself with their highest aspirations, was a thing beyond his power. He preferred to adopt tacitly the theory that a nation is a concourse of human atoms, and not a living and spiritual entity, thus far anticipating the principles of Hobbes and Herbert Spencer. And this was his fundamental error, that both in his individual and social relations he preferred abstractions to life. As he was hopelessly at sea in judging of a Carr, a Villiers, or a Gondomar, so he could never understand either the English people or an English Parliament; as the classical economists were to leave the humanity of men out of their calculations, so James preferred to ignore it in his science and practice of kingcraft, and for the same reason—it was a disturbing factor.

The doctrine of James was one which was to become, in later times, the greatest enemy of patriotism. Though admitting that the King should govern by the laws, James expressly repudiated the notion of a social compact; the bond between him and his subjects was personal and its sanction supernatural. It was feudalism without the barons. And thus, when James comes to the throne, there is an instant revival of the dynastic system. Peace is concluded with Spain, on the ground that the King of Scotland cannot be at war with Philip. We need not be surprised that, from the beginning to the end of his reign, the divine King never ceases to irritate his subjects, by insulting and ignoring their most sacred prejudices and time-honoured institutions.

James had come from a land whose law was modelled largely upon that of France, and therefore was the product of Roman ideas. James' mind had naturally

become adapted to the Roman point of view, and he was never able to enter into the spirit of English institutions. He could not purge his mind of the notion, that in the last resort the monarch was above the law, and like the pedant he was, nothing would content him but to be always forcing his theory down the throats of his Commons. Nor had he the least comprehension of that religious respect for existing rights, however illogical, that had been inculcated by centuries of precedent. His first two gaucheries, of violating the privilege of the subject by hanging a thief without trial, and the privilege of Parliament by deciding contested elections in Chancery, were the surest means of awakening the formidable resistance of the Common Law, and of its High Priest, Sir Edward Coke. Yet the mistake was natural in one who aimed at administrative efficiency before the integrity of existing rights.

It is easy to picture the Court by which such a man came to be surrounded. Elizabeth's Court had certainly not been a model of moral or political purity, but she had at least managed to surround herself with grave and patriotic advisers, and if she had favourites, she was capable of keeping them under control, and even cutting off their heads, if occasion required. "Sweet Robin" may have possessed her heart, but Burleigh and Walsingham were supreme at her Council board. With the advent of James the restraining hand was withdrawn, the state of the Court became a scandal, and very soon a public scandal. The career of Robert Carr threw a sinister light upon the workings of divine monarchy. Carr was the worthless Scot his enemies depicted him, but he had a pretty face, and that was enough for James. There are few more nauseous spectacles than that of the infatuated old King insisting upon the sharp practice that was to cheat the imprisoned Sir Walter Raleigh of his manor of Sherbourne, and crying out, "I maun have

the land for Carr, I maun have the land for Carr!" The sight of this upstart, loaded with every possible honour, was unpleasant enough for Englishmen, but it was ten times worse when a scandalous divorce was openly procured, in order that the favourite might marry a noble lady of easy virtue, and worst of all when the wretched Carr, now an earl, was convicted of murder in connection with the divorce. Then, too, peerages of the realm were put up for sale, and the new order of baronetcy was created in order to raise money from the recipients; practices which can only be defended upon the ground that they have become part of the regular machinery of modern politics. As for Buckingham, his princely fortune was accumulated by a system of corruption, which was carried on with the full approval of the King, and applicants for office paid regular toll to the favourite.

The head of the nation was, in fact, sickening, and the members were bound to suffer accordingly. When the legally established Government is rotten, it must either infect the people with its decay, or else the people must work out their salvation for themselves, independently of the Government. In Elizabeth's time the group of statesmen round the throne had stood for what was best and most deeply felt in England, the royal will corresponded roughly with the general will. Loyalty to the Government was the same as loyalty to the country, and "God save the Queen" meant the same as "God save England." This was the cry of the Puritan who had his right hand cut off and waved his hat with his left; it was on the lips of the recusants who watched the militia training through the bars of Ely prison. It was so in the "Faerie Queene," where Britomart, the royal virgin, stands for the past and present and future greatness of England. But under James it was not so.

His position was a hard one. On the whole he had served his first country well, putting down the rebellious

Scottish lords, and restraining the excesses of militant Calvinism. But his task in England, if less arduous, was more difficult, for a strong central Government was already established, and it was incumbent upon the ruler to maintain its strength by keeping it national. Had James been a really wise man, he might have asked himself what this England of his stood for, what was her faith, her creed, her guiding principle amid the conflict of nations. Foremost of all, in the mind of every true Englishman, must have been the proud and intense consciousness of national independence. The countrymen of Drake and Robin Hood liked to think of themselves as "free-born Englishmen," and their country as "merrie England," a

> "Fortress built by nature for herself,
> Against infection and the hand of man."

This consciousness of liberty was not incompatible with practical tyranny at the hands of native governors. The judges of Sir Edward Coke's time must have been a terror both to good and evil doers, and Parliament itself had little enough respect for the liberties of the subject.

But the decent forms must be preserved. Better to behead a Raleigh after the mockery of a trial than to hang a thief, caught red-handed, without any trial at all. It is a well-known feature of the parliamentary opposition to the Stuarts that appeal was made not so much to what was right as to what was old. The liberty of Englishmen was the heritage of their ancestors, a thing to be maintained, not acquired.

But as far as her international relations were concerned, English liberty was only the foundation of a larger policy. She had faced Spain as the champion of Reformation principles, perhaps vaguely conceived, but none the less stoutly maintained. Her soldiers had crossed the seas to defend the liberties of Protestant Holland. The English Bible was treasured and read over

the length and breadth of the kingdom, and even went to sea with Drake and Essex. As yet, Englishmen had not been very solicitous about pushing these principles to a conclusion, and their zeal for the Protestant cause was fired principally by their hatred of all that they had come to associate with Rome and Spain. To this every native instinct helped to contribute. Popery was an enemy implacable, crafty, cruel, un-English. It walked in darkness, its weapons were the dagger and the petard, no man knew what or where its strength might be. The Jesuits were abroad, desperate men, so the popular imagination depicted them, who had no conscience save that of Rome, and shrank from no crime in her interests. What might be the number of concealed traitors no one knew, certain it was that their numbers were not to be gauged by the working of the Recusancy Acts. And then, at the beginning of the new reign, came Watson's conspiracy, and the horror of the Gunpowder Plot. This was the last nail in the coffin of English popery. The diabolical nature of the plot, and the narrow margin by which it failed of success, impressed themselves for ever upon the imaginations of Englishmen.

> "I see no reason
> Why Gunpowder treason
> Should ever be forgot."

Henceforth, nothing was too bad to be believed of the Papists. Laud's ecclesiastical policy was inspired by them. They had caused the Fire of London. Anything that could be even remotely connected with popery was certain to set the whole country in a ferment of resentment. And with that menace was now, and for the next half-century, associated the power of Spain. How hard she was hit by her war for the Counter-Reformation, how surely her power was passing away, was a thing hidden from Englishmen. With the exception of the seven Dutch States, her vast territories were intact, her

army was the most formidable in Europe. Besides, it must be confessed that Englishmen had another and less exalted motive for attacking her. Her huge empire offered the possibility of unlimited plunder.

A nation teeming with enthusiastic life would hardly accept, as a final solution, the patchy and formal compromise of the Elizabethan Church. England, which had battled so hard for the principle of the Reformation, was likely to make at least an attempt to realize the treasure she had won. The desire for unimpeded union with Christ was not to be satisfied within the official pale. And thus the Puritan movement, which all the strength of Elizabeth had not been able to put down, represents an inevitable desire to reap the full harvest of the Reformation. It had not as yet grown disloyal, though the seeds of revolution had been planted by its Continental and Scottish fathers. And even in the time of Elizabeth, it was represented in more than due proportion within the walls of Parliament.

Finally, we have to reckon with another motive, less noble than that of religion, and sometimes in conflict with it. England was becoming, to an increasing extent, a commercial nation. It has ever been the fault of business temperament to view every problem of State from its own business standpoint, and James was right when he said, "The merchants think the whole commonwealth ordained to keep them up." Thus it was evident that the King's position as regulator of English trade would be one of the utmost difficulty, and that anything of the nature of arbitrary interference would be a fatal error. As it was, the mercantile interest was ready to take umbrage at the slightest alteration of the tariff, and the grievance of the monopolies had been only assuaged, but not healed, by Elizabeth. While religious motives directed our hostility against Spain, commercial interest rather pointed against Holland, and economic

jealousy was characteristically more intelligible to the exponent of kingcraft than Puritan zeal. It was different with the nation.

Such, in rough outline, was the situation that confronted James. Hatred of the Papacy, Protestant enthusiasm, the liberties of England, and lastly commercial interest, were the ideas dominant over the great body of his subjects. With the last of these only had he any real sympathy, and that of a blundering and fitful kind. Against the rest he set himself in wanton and obtuse opposition. He started his reign under the most favourable circumstances; his record in Scotland promised well, and, such is human gratitude, most of her subjects were not at all sorry to be rid of the imperious old Queen. His first Parliament, despite its Puritan bias, was naturally loyal, and their unwillingness to quarrel with the King is in marked contrast with the spirit that prevailed under James' son. But James was as blind to opportunities as he was to obstacles. He had a golden chance of making the Church national, in fact as well as in name, at the Hampton Court Conference. But the professor in him was stronger than the king. He went to the Conference to argue and to take a side and, worst of all, to score points off his opponents. As is usually the case where the pedagogue is armed with authority, he had no idea of seeing fair play a moment longer than it suited him, and he ended by losing his temper. By fair means or foul, he had carried the day, and wrought for himself and his house an irreparable injury. Then, when he met his Parliament, he repeated his folly on a larger scale.

They thought in precedent; he discoursed to them of abstract principles, and these of the most dangerous and disputable kind. It is possible that this incompatibility of temperament was national, for the Scottish mind has tended to dwell more upon pure theory than the English.

Instead of letting dormant liberties lie, he forced the Parliament to assert, as counter-claims, rights that they would scarcely have thought of claiming in the ordinary course of things. The answer to prerogative was privilege, and behind privilege was the power of the purse.

For all this, it is impossible not to have some sympathy with James. According to his lights, he was doing his duty, and he was not without a fair amount of theoretical sagacity. In some respects he saw further than his Parliament. He was, for instance, in favour of anticipating by a century the union of his two kingdoms, and it is possible that this statesmanlike and far-sighted plan might have enjoyed some measure of success, if James had understood the feelings of his English subjects, instead of setting forth his views in plausible but tactless argument. In truth, the scheme required the most careful handling, for in more than one respect it was calculated to irritate English prejudice. There was the old hatred of the Scot, which found expression in the good old way through a speech, to which the House listened without a murmur of dissent. Then the cupidity of the merchants was crossed by the proposal of a fiscal union, and Scottish competition was feared more than the larger ends of policy were desired. The force of these arguments might perhaps have been overcome in practice, as they were demolished in theory by Francis Bacon, had not the nation been sensitive to a nobler fear, which neither Bacon nor James was fitted to understand.

How if, in grasping after Great Britain, we should lose England? On these lines has run the most formidable argument against imperialism. It was pointed out at the time, that the same personal and dynastic plea which would have joined England and Scotland under James, would have joined England and Spain under Philip and Mary. Believers in the imperial principle will reply that this objection, though it cannot be disproved

in the abstract, was in this instance answerable by reference to the facts. But this answer could only have carried conviction from the lips of one who was fully in sympathy with the threatened patriotism. So was not James, and the scheme dropped.

It was in his foreign policy that James had, and availed himself of, the easiest opportunity of alienating his people's sympathy. He was indeed alive to the prime necessity of keeping up the royal navy, in spite of his chronic want of money, which prevented him from maintaining an adequate force. But he made the fatal mistake of friendship, and more than friendship, with Spain. His evil genius was not so much Carr or Buckingham, as a man with whom neither of the English favourites was fit to be compared. This was the stately and talented Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador. Though Gondomar was no friend to England, his genius and character cannot but command our admiration, serving loyally, as he did, the tottering Government of Philip III, even in the throes of a cruel disease, and longing to be rid of his burden. Very soon the superior force of his character had given him the mastery over James, and henceforth this egregious King actually made a practice of confiding in a man whose very duty made him indifferent, at best, to our interests, and whose religious principles were abhorrent alike to English law and sentiment. The lengths to which Gondomar permitted himself to go, in his intercourse with James, are almost incredible. At one time, after some anti-Spanish debates in the Commons, he informed James that he would be no king if he allowed this sort of thing to go on, and actually expressed regret that he himself had not got an army on the spot to chastise an English Parliament. On the other hand, it was fatal for an Englishman to insult Gondomar. An apprentice, whose unruly tongue had got him into a brawl with one of the ambassador's servants, was

sentenced with his companions, by a reluctant Lord Mayor, to be flogged through the streets, and when they were rescued from such treatment by a mob, James himself came down to the City to threaten condign punishment, unless the sentence were carried out. One of the lads died under the lash.

Thus James, who rejected with indignation the advice of his own Commons, submitted to dictation, and even bullying, at the hands of Gondomar. More he could scarcely have done to cut himself off from the sympathy of his people. From the very first he had stood forth as the declared friend of Spain. He had commenced his reign by putting a stop to the war, perhaps a wise step in itself, and leaving his Dutch allies in the lurch. What is more, he was determined that peace should be kept, and in proclamation after proclamation, he denounced the practices of the sea-dogs. This may have been wise, though it certainly was not likely to be popular. And yet there is spirit in his reply to Gondomar's boast, that his master had all the treasure of the Indies. "And I, by my soul," said the King, "have much ado to prevent my subjects from taking it away from him." But as to James's conduct in the matter of Raleigh's last voyage, there could not, and cannot be, two opinions. To have allowed the poor fellow, desperate from years of imprisonment, to sail on a hopeless expedition with a death sentence hanging over his head, was an act of unpardonable callousness. No generous feeling warmed James' little soul towards a man who, with all his faults, was one of the greatest of Englishmen.

Hot-headed adventurers like Raleigh bothered him; they were troublesome pieces in the game of kingcraft, though a certain amount of money might possibly be made out of them, if all risks were barred by making death the penalty of failure. Thus, failing the gold mine on the Orinoco or even the Mexico fleet, Philip and Gondomar

could be appeased. What followed upon that failure is lamentable reading. Gondomar was allowed to browbeat and bully the King, who, had he dared, would have given up Raleigh to be hanged in the market-place of Madrid. Happily the country was spared that last degradation. The prentices of London, no hooligans, but the sons of respectable and often gentle parents, thought otherwise of Gondomar, and were soon at work mobbing his house, drawing down upon themselves the condign vengeance of the King, and the still more galling patronage of the ambassador. Just before Raleigh made his last journey to London, Gondomar was riding, in insolent pomp, to Dover, taking with him all the priests that could be collected from all the prisons in England. What was the feeling of patriotic Englishmen, may be gauged from the words addressed by the old Lord High Admiral, the vanquisher of the Armada, to Stukeley, who had played the spy on Raleigh during his last days. "What, thou base fellow! Thou, who art reputed the scorn and contempt of men, how darest thou offer thyself into my presence?" A generous heart would have known that the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh was unthinkable, a mean understanding only perceived that it was legal.

We need not detail the long diplomatic futility of the purposed Spanish marriage. Of course there were excellent arguments, from the standpoint of the king-craftsman, for such a scheme, had it only been feasible. It would have meant getting quite a fair amount of money without the necessity of calling a Parliament; a connection with the Hapsburgs would give an added dignity to the House of Stuart, and might even place a descendant of James upon the throne of Spain. But only his egregious lack of sympathy could have blinded him so utterly to the human realities of the case. Philip and Gondomar were fooling him to the top of his bent, but this was a small thing compared with the effect the prospect of a Spanish

marriage had upon his subjects. It meant, as every one knew, an abject surrender to Papacy, it meant that the King's sons would be brought up in the faith of Alva and Guy Fawkes, and that Rome would be established in the heart of England. When Prince Charles returned from his ridiculous courtship of the Infanta, the country went into a transport of joy, to know that he had escaped the clutches of Spain, and that the hated prospect of a Spanish Queen was now finally dissolved.

Towards the end of his reign, James had a chance of retrieving his position in the eyes of his subjects. The contest of Reformation and Counter-Reformation had been less bloody, but none the less deadly, during the first years of the century. During the long, uneasy peace that had prevailed in Germany, the Catholics, and especially the devoted Jesuits, had been busy winning back the lost ground of Rome. Already the Southern Provinces were reclaimed. Only a spark was needed to fire the long-prepared train of war, and this was applied by the Calvinist Elector Palatine. The seizure of the Bohemian crown was a rash, if not a criminal blunder, and the Winter King paid for it as he deserved, but the issue was not between Frederick and Ferdinand, or even between Austria and the Palatinate. It was the supreme effort of Rome, backed by the great House of Austria, to stamp out the work of Luther and restore the unity of the Church. Might not Tilly, Wallenstein and Spinola succeed where Alva and Parma had failed? James, wise in his own conceit, could only see a personal quarrel between a headstrong young fool, who was after all a son-in-law, and a justly outraged King; but to his subjects it was as if Michael and his angels were fighting on the German plains against the Dragon and his angels.

Though the people did not underestimate the gravity of the German situation, it was not towards Germany that their warlike ardour was directed. By a true

instinct they recognized that the two branches of the House of Austria must necessarily stand together, and that one of these was more vulnerable than the other. Popular sentiment favoured the Palsgrave and his beautiful English queen, but Spain and not Austria was the real enemy. Even before James had come to the throne, everything Spanish had been anathema, and English animosity had been constantly irritated by the spectacle of Gondomar. In Parliament, unmeasured attacks were directed against Spain, to the sorrow of James, and the scornful indignation of the ambassador.

Crabbed old Sir Edward Coke exceeded his own considerable faculty of abuse. The sheep-rot, and a still fouler disease, originated in Spanish territory. The Spanish embassy was a danger comparable to the wooden horse of Troy. "Never came anything from Spain but did either damage us or endeavour it." Another member intimated, in the same debate, that before they gave a supply, they should make it quite clear to the King who the real enemy was.

What was thought, outside Court circles, of a Spanish match, is apparent in a late play of Middleton's, written near the end of the reign, and called "A Game of Chess." The white pieces are the English, and the black, of course, the Spaniards. In the prologue appears the Founder of the Jesuits, and calls up Error to inspire the Spanish counsels. In the end, the black king is ignominiously checkmated by discovery—and this is but one of the many straws which show how strong the wind was blowing against Spain. Among the Somers Tracts of this time is a dialogue in Elysium, between the dead sovereigns of England, accusing the Spaniards of all sorts of crimes. Raleigh's final apology had been a proud defiance of his life-long foe. The Indies still offered their golden harvest for adventurers, the war would only be a continuation of the glories of Elizabeth, and it would be feasible for

devout Protestants to serve God and Mammon at the same time without inconsistency. At the prospect of war, the old enthusiasm flared up at once, and we find at the end of the reign the "True Trojans," a play of quite the old patriotic stamp, in which Cæsar and the Britons contend, and honours are evenly divided.

James' conduct in the matter was what might have been expected. His obvious policy was to have taken his Parliament frankly into his confidence, and to have directed their enthusiasm against the old enemy. Had he only given them a lead, there can be little doubt that they would have followed him as loyally as he could have desired. But James was incapable of conduct so simple. He had a theory that foreign policy was a matter which concerned him alone, and that the only business of the Commons was to vote subsidies in support of schemes which they were not fitted to understand. The result was that the Commons never knew what was in their King's mind, and thus their generosity was damped by want of trust. This need not have been so, if only James had shown what was in his own mind. But the forces with which he had to deal were too great for either his control or his understanding, and kingcraft broke down ignominiously at all points. His son-in-law annoyed him by his outrageous conduct; Ferdinand was immoderate in his resentment; the protagonists in the struggle were generally unreasonable and pugnacious, and would be better for the advice of an old and wise king. Poor James was very unwilling to go beyond the wordy warfare which was so congenial to him. He prided himself most of all on being a peacemaker, and earning the benediction pronounced on the Mount in Palestine, and printed in the edition of his works published during his lifetime. He went to Gondomar, of all people, querulously complaining of his son-in-law's conduct. His ambassadors were busy at the different Courts offering excellent, but unheeded,

advice. Through it all the deluded old man was clinging to his obsession of a Spanish marriage. He actually thought that he was capable of separating one branch of Hapsburg from the other, and of getting Spain to restrain Austria. Only the failure of Prince Charles' escapade at Madrid made it apparent, even to him, that the Spanish game could be played no longer. After that, he ceased to be more than a roi fainéant, and his son and his favourite reigned in his stead.

James' notions of making war were as futile as his way of keeping the peace. He had not sense enough to see that what the country wanted was not a land war against Austria, but a sea war against Spain. But all that James was capable of doing was to lend a niggardly and bankrupt support to that wickedest and most futile of allies, the ruffian Mansfeld. This man, fighting without principle, creed, or goal, went about with such scum of the earth as he could gather together, and lived by the sufferings of any unfortunate folk upon which he could quarter himself, whether they were friends, foes or neutrals. A termination of the war was the last thing Mansfeld desired, or was likely to obtain. Unsupported by his Parliament, and therefore without the money to pay them, James let thousands of poor fellows be dragged from their homes to starve and rot without even striking a blow. Alas for England! The country had ceased to trust the King, and the King did not trust the country; the ship of State was adrift amid great seas, rudderless and leaking, with an incapable pilot and a mutinous crew.

The system of the Tudors was evidently out of gear, and the central power they had taken such trouble to create had lost touch with the country. It was not that there was anything specially wicked about James; his Court, bad as it was, would still compare favourably with that of Henry VIII, and might even challenge comparison

with that of Elizabeth. But the men who held the reins of power, and enjoyed its sweets, had got out of touch with what was best in the nation, they had ceased even to understand in what direction their duty lay. Hence they had become like rotten branches of a tree, into which the quickening sap no longer flows, and which have ceased to bear leaf or fruit. Such branches may perchance need the discipline of the axe before the tree can grow sound again.

As the patriotic spirit of the Elizabethans grows cold, there comes a decay over our literature, accompanied by all the symptoms, which are usually associated with a decadent age, elaborate artificiality, refinement of subtlety, predominance of form over matter. The spirit of the Renaissance had ceased to be national, it was only the tone of the Court. The true revival was to be looked for in the austere, gloomier spirit which was to produce an Oliver and a Blake in action, a Milton and a Bunyan in thought.

The art that the courtiers of James appreciated, is seen at its best in the drama of Beaumont and Fletcher. Not only were their plays in every respect inferior to Shakespeare, but even had their command of metre and language been equal to his, they could by no possibility have approached him, for their ideas moved upon a lower plane. In almost every sentence of Shakespeare, even in the speeches of the Falstaffs and Clowns, we feel ourselves in touch with the infinite, but Fletcher is only in touch with his audience. His work is fitted together with masterful dexterity, the puppets perform as by some exquisitely adjusted machinery, but the universal element, which is the essence of all great art, is absent.

These courtier playwrights find it impossible to conceive of what seems almost a commonplace in the mouth of Shakespeare. The patriotism of a Faulconbridge, a Brutus, a Gaunt, a Macduff, is superseded by an overstrained sentimental loyalty to the person of the sovereign,

be he good or bad. Shakespeare had given but a lukewarm allegiance to divine right, though Corneille and Bossuet were to show that the doctrine was not incompatible with the most devoted love towards the Motherland. A very different spirit animated Beaumont and Fletcher. Their kings are the kings of Fairyland, or the little autocrats of Italian cities, irresponsible creatures who off with heads in their bad moods, and give away half the kingdom in their good moods.

Fletcher's idea of loyalty may be judged from "The Loyal Subject," the story of an old general who allows himself, without protest, to be disgraced, insulted, robbed, whipped and racked, who gives up his daughters to shame and his son to execution, and who is overcome with gratitude and devotion when he is restored to favour at the end of the piece. In the "Maid's Tragedy," a play in which Beaumont had the largest share, the hero is prevented, by the name of King, from resisting the blackest and most unpardonable dishonour. In "Philaster," the plot hinges about the disputed succession to a kingdom, as purely personal as a lawsuit about an estate; in "Thierry and Theodoret" we have the story of Jephthah without Jephthah's patriotism; and finally, in the "False One," the rivalry of Cæsar and Pompey is treated as a background to the love of Cæsar and Cleopatra.

In fact, throughout Beaumont and Fletcher, the sex motive is predominant. This is a far cry from Shakespeare, for in only one of his four greatest tragedies, in one only of his three Roman plays, and in none of his English chronicles does sex occupy more than a secondary place. As the love interest is allowed to swamp every other, even love comes to be treated more as a convention, and less as a reality, or perhaps we should say that the most genuine element in Beaumont and Fletcher's sort of love is a physical and prurient grossness, which the fine clothes and

fine manners of its victims hardly conceal. This was a faithful mirror of James' Court.

Besides their licentiousness, these authors were the most complacent of snobs. They had no sympathy with the jolly prentice adventurers of Elizabethan drama, and they composed a brilliant and scathing satire, "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," to ridicule the notion that a mere apprentice could by any possibility share in either the courage or refinement of his betters. The prentices showed their appreciation of its point by hooting it off the stage. Incidentally, an opportunity was taken of making game of the City militia, lads who were to break Rupert's charge at Newbury. Nowhere do we find a more striking proof than in these plays that public spirit and literary greatness have gone hand in hand. The English drama rose upon the crest of Elizabethan patriotism, and sank into the trough of Stuart reaction.

Even in metre the change is apparent. The blank verse of Shakespeare, with its long gradual cadences and infinite adaptability, is a thing of the past. What with redundancies and weak endings, the lines of the later dramatists sprawl about like garden flowers when seed-time is at hand. Sugary prettiness is the characteristic of Fletcher's prosody, slip-shod dullness of Massinger's, but whatever may be the special characteristic of any given author, the tendency is constant towards a loss of control over the instrument; the magic reed no longer responds to the touch of these new shepherds, or perhaps, when awaked by a Ford, it gives forth one true note, and only one, of dying sweetness. Beaumont and Fletcher are still near enough to Shakespeare to recapture the spell for short seasons, and at long intervals, but they are the first of a descending series.

In Massinger we might expect to find a more patriotic note, for in no dramatist of his time are there such frequent references to politics. We shall be disappointed.

In one of his plays, "The Roman Actor," he gives his theory of the drama. Speaking through the mouth of Paris, he shows how a good play serves a direct moral purpose, how by extolling worthy actions and never letting vice go unpunished, the actors tend to raise the tone of their audience. He even rises to the height of showing how, by the example of noble actions, the youth of a country may be taught to love her. This same idea of instilling patriotism by education occurs, also, in a treatise on politics written by Raleigh in prison. This is excellent in theory, but unfortunately Massinger's practice does not conform to it. Though all his plays are professedly written to point a moral, which is generally tacked on in a couplet at the end, few plays are so essentially immoral. Their atmosphere is that of a Court, and a Court of the most degenerate and vitiated kind. The ladies are weak and lascivious, without any sincerity or depth of passion, and the love affairs are generally disgusting. Satan himself, with horns, hoof and tail, is not so repulsive an object as a sick devil, disguised in a monk's habit.

Despite the excellent precept of Paris, the morals attached to Massinger's plays, and the motives of his characters, are purely individual. In "The Roman Actor," the play in which he most nearly attains a wider scope of vision, the plot is a Court intrigue against a stage villain turned æsthete, the moral being that tyrants come to a bad end. Not a word is there about ruining the State; Domitian's crimes are domestic, and mainly individual affairs. The same indifference to patriotism is the mark of Ford's historical play, "Perkin Warbeck." Henry VII is depicted, accurately enough, as a prosaic, business-like man, and to defeat such a conspiracy as that of Perkin is only part of his business as a king. He is as superior to Beaumont and Fletcher's monarchs as he is inferior to the English kings of Shakespeare. But we

cannot find a single speech which stamps any one as a patriot. Warbeck at one point poses to James of Scotland in the words, "Spare, spare, my dear, dear England"; Surrey will not meet James in single combat, on the ground that his duty to the King does not permit of it. Beyond this, the play is merely the record of an interesting dynastic conspiracy, and the moral, as pointed by Henry VII, is the eminently courtly one that States thrive best when purged of corrupted blood.

We have observed how the literature of Elizabeth's last years had tended to run riot in new and strange forms. Even in Shakespeare, we are frequently near the borderline which divides inspiration from conceit. But Shakespeare and his companions were preserved from slipping by the fact that they had something intensely serious to say; they were voicing a national movement, and hence they had not time, amid the rush of ideas that was continually pressing upon them, to dwell overlong upon the elaboration of any particular thought. He who speaks for his country, harvests God's plenty. Besides, there were great certainties to keep their minds steady, the galleons and the stake, the righteousness of their cause, the wickedness of Spain. It is upon such certainties that patriotism is built. Let doubt creep in, and then confidence grows lukewarm, self-sacrifice halts between two opinions, and patriotism has wavered into a decline.

The reign of James I is eminently a period of doubt. The religious and political pressure was relaxed, and the big, steady enthusiasm of Armada days died down. The same causes that produced our shifty, shiftless foreign policy, caused a similar time of questioning indecision in literature. The King did not know his own mind, and the people did not always know theirs. Did the ordinary man decide to serve his King? But to serve the King might be the same thing as serving Gondomar, or taking sides against England's liberties. Did he desire a strong

navy? This might mean a navy in the hands of a fop—a few years later it would mean ship-money. Or did he stand for the principles of the Reformation? In that case he might find opponents not only in the Bishop of Rome and the King of Spain, but in the natural champions of the Protestant cause, the King and the Church of England.

There have been attempts to establish a connection between French preciosity, Spanish Gongorism, and English "wit" or "conceit" in literature. All these bear the same marks of over-subtlety, divorce from reality, and strained antithesis. But the only real connection that can be traced between them is that they were the results of similar causes. Each was a literature of decadence, but, in France and England at least, it was the decadence of only part of the nation. Just as the great nobles of France headed the anti-national party of the nation, so did the courts of James and Charles represent a caste which was getting more and more out of touch with the spirit of the nation. And as in France the real strength of the nation had shifted to the bourgeoisie, which in alliance with the monarchy was to reduce the noblesse to impotence, so in England the main stream of national thought and art had its foundation in the Puritan gentry and middle class, the class which was to produce a Milton and a Cromwell.

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# CHAPTER IX

## THE FALL OF THE TUDOR SYSTEM

THE outbreak of the Thirty Years' War was the King's golden opportunity for wiping off all his former blunders, and putting himself at the head of a united nation. For the strong Protestant feeling behind the Parliament had not yet been diverted from patriotism to domestic quarrels, nor had it become revolutionary. Puritan sentiment was not yet generally hostile to the Church of England; Archbishop Abbott was, in matters of doctrine, a true successor of Whitgift, and viewed with unconcealed disapproval the easy moral code that sanctioned the Essex divorce. Both in doctrine and practice he was the opposite of Laud. Church and King were still capable of drawing after them a nation which was crying out for a lead. A singularly pure enthusiasm animated the nation, and material considerations weighed little in the balance against a cause wherein our honour and our faith seemed to be involved. This is apparent when we consider the relations between England and her old ally, Holland.

We might well, from a business point of view, have had more to dread from Holland than from the decaying power of Spain. She was our great rival in trade and sea power, and had, in fact, outstripped us. It fell to a Dutch admiral to capture the Plate fleet, a task which had baffled the ingenuity of Elizabeth's sea-dogs. And there were enough matters in dispute to drive any two nations into war, had they been so disposed. In the

East Indies, the Dutch aimed at a monopoly hardly less absolute than Philip's, and a series of outrages culminated in the massacre of Amboina. Nearer home, our rights over the British seas, dating, if Selden was to be believed, as far back as the reign of John, were called in question. James tried to levy a toll on the Dutch herring fishery, and the Dutch would not pay. A similar dispute had arisen over the Greenland fisheries. If the course of history were governed only by economic motives, there would have been no doubt who our enemy would have been. But though James, with his usual obtuseness, was readier to push a quarrel with Holland than with Spain, his people manifested singularly little interest even in their legitimate grievances against the Dutch.

"The Interpreter" contains a fine statement of disinterested patriotism. It speaks thus of the sham "Protestant":

> "A Protestant is he, that fain would take
> Occasion from the East and West, to shake
> Our league with the United Provinces:
> To which end he hath many fair pretences.
> Our honour first, for in the Greenland, they
> And the East Indies, beat our ships away.
> Our profit likewise, for in both these places
> We do great loss sustain, besides disgraces.
> And in the narrow seas, where we are masters,
> They will presume to be our herring tasters!"

The matter is fairly stated, and must have formed then, as it would nowadays, a strong enough case for at least leaving the Dutch in the lurch, which is all the time-serving Protestant demands. But the Puritan treats such an appeal with scorn:

> "A herring cob, we see, will make him quarrel,
> What could the man do, think you, for a barrel?
> Well would I wish these things were all amended,
> But greater business now is to be tended.
> Our lives, Religions, Liberties, and Lands
> Upon this nice and tickle quarrel stand,
> And we must for a fitter time attend,
> Else Spain will soon this controversy end."

This is a noble and far-sighted pronouncement of a kind unusual in pamphlet literature. A stern and uncompromising spirit was abroad, and England, as distinct from the Court, felt that her duty placed her in the van of the great Protestant movement, which the re-gathered forces of the Counter-Reformation threatened to submerge.

This rhymed pamphlet will repay further inspection. It shows how the Court was ceasing to have part or lot in the patriotism of the nation. It gives a description of three types of men—the Romanist, the Protestant of the trimming and courtly stamp, and the Puritan. The Romanist is, of course, possessed of no redeeming feature. He is the subject of Spain and the slave of Rome; he thinks that the House of Austria was appointed to rule the world; he holds it part of his faith to commit treason, and he would gladly murder the King. A more interesting and subtly drawn character is the Protestant, whose attitude upon the Dutch question we have just quoted. He is the Pliable of the Reformation, the man who set his hand to the plough and looked back. Such a one is no true subject, but a slave; he makes a god of the King. He is such a creature as the system of James would tend to produce, the ready tool of royalty, who would have been christened with Constantine and apostatized with Julian, who knows how, wisely, to swim with the stream, and has no eye for anything except his private advantage. He naturally has no enthusiasms, his horizon is bounded by kingcraft. His rise from office to office is described, and also the various means of bringing him to heel, in case he inclines to be troublesome. It might be a description of modern party management:

> "Besides, the honoured style of Viscount, Lord,
> Earl, Marquis, Duke, can work, at every word,
> Strange alterations, more than Circe's cup,
> In such as can no other way get up."

The Puritan, on the other hand, is the disinterested patriot, the man who would be a subject, but not a slave. Such a one would drop all differences, and sink our last penny in defence of the States, rather than spend one hundred thousand pounds a year in helping to keep the coasts of Spain safe from the Barbary pirates. He is not afraid to speak his mind in Parliament, even of royal favourites; he does not oppose any man because he is a courtier or a Scot, but only when he deems him to be a foe to the State. The free, generous and noble spirit which he has inherited from his old English stock makes him speak the truth without fear. He will not be a traitor to the King, nor yet to the Laws, but he does not believe any man to be a traitor till the law, as in Parliament decreed, calls him one.

> "Nay, he condemns
> All such as traitors be to Church or State,
> Who for the love of one, all others hate,
> And for particular ends and private aims
> Forsake their country. . . ."

The Puritan, in fact, had now come to stand for the nation against the interest and intrigue of the Court. Such a situation was ominous of civil dissension, and perhaps, ultimately, of civil war. It was a sign of the times that the play of Middleton's, to which we have already alluded, and in which the King was for the first time directly satirized, drew crowds to see it, until it was prudently stopped by authority. But Middleton's play, and even "The Interpreter," are pinpricks compared with the terrific indictment of royal policy that masquerades under the name of Tom Tell Troath. We have no reason to cavil at this *nom de plume*, for the impression we get of Tom is that of a sincere and educated man, labouring under the strongest conviction, and really loyal to a monarch who is living in a poisoned mist of illusions.

Reading it, we become conscious of the first stirrings of the tempest, which was to sweep away throne and all.

"In your majesty's own taverns," it says, "for one health that is begun to yourself there are ten drunk to the princes—your foreign children. And when the wine is in their heads, Lord have mercy on their tongues! Even in the very gaming ordinaries where men have scarce leisure to say grace, yet they take a time to censure your majesty's actions, and that in the old school terms." The business men who thronged the aisle of the old Gothic St. Paul's, a practice which was to call down the indignation of Laud, were afraid to talk about State matters, but they asked how the material church, whose steeple had been struck by lightning, was ever to be repaired, when the spiritual and more worthy Church was suffered to go to ruin.

Tom Tell Troath's own position is not essentially different from that of "The Interpreter." He wishes to show the King that the patriotism of the nation is against him, and with the Puritan champions of the Protestant cause abroad. "I vow to God and your majesty," he says, "I can come into no meetings but I find the predominant humour to be talking of the wars of Christendom and honour of their country and suchlike treasons, and would to God they would stop there, and profane no more the things that are above them; but such is the rage and folly of their tongues that they spare not your majesty's sacred person . . . some there are who find such fault with your majesty's government as they wish Queen Elizabeth alive again, who, they say, would never have suffered the enemies of her religion to have unbalanced Christendom as they have done within these few years.

"They make a mock of your word Great Britain, and offer to prove that it is a great deal less than little England was wont to be, less in reputation, less in strength, less in riches, less in all manner of virtue, and whatever else is required to make a State great and happy."

It is easy to guess upon what lines the indictment will

proceed, nor need we follow it out in detail. But the passage about Gondomar is worth quoting, if only to show how fatal had been the mistake of the English King in allowing his actions to be swayed by such an adviser:— "They that fly higher and fix their speculations upon the mysteries of the Court do apparently perceive that the Councell of Gondomar hath taught some of your active ministers to juggle, only to make them passively capable of his own conjuring, and that by the penetrating faculty of a yellow Indian demon he hath at command, and is master of your cabinet without a key, and knows your secrets before the greatest part and most faithful of your council. And which is worse, they say, your majesty knows it." There was, unfortunately, no exaggeration in this charge, as the London mob, who attacked the Spanish Embassy, knew only too well.

A people out of touch with its Government, and fired by religious enthusiasm, is not apt to limit its aspirations by considerations of practicability. Though Spain and Austria were already marked out for our enemies, Protestant ardour would have added France to their number. The struggle of Catholic and Huguenot, which was to end with the dragonnades and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had already begun, and English Protestants did not wish to see their brethren perish unaided. Both Cowell and Tom Tell Troath are emphatic upon this point, and the latter warns his readers of the danger of a French invasion, if we allow France to become united and Catholic. We may now realize the perversity of James' last stroke of kingcraft, in crowning the folly of the frustrated Spanish match by pairing off his jilted "Baby Charles" with the daughter of Catholic France.

But we must not imagine that James alone was responsible for kingcraft, nor that all the opposition to his rule was necessarily Puritan. Sir Edward Coke occupies a place in the English Revolution similar to that of the

Parlement de Paris in the French. His is a lonely and portentous figure, a living abstraction, serving causes that are not his own. An inhuman judge and an inhuman father, there is singularly little about him to attract our sympathy, and yet the old man must have had some blood in him, for we read in our parliamentary records how, to close the debate on the Palatinate, "Sir Edward Coke, with tears in his eyes, standing up, recited the collect for the King and his issue, adding only to it 'and defend them from their cruel enemies.'" There is an austere and stoic grandeur about him, that compels our respect, if it does not command our love. Utterly worthless men do not shun delights and live laborious days to compile such treatises as Coke's. He merely carried to a conclusion a tendency that we may see developed, to some extent, in almost every practising lawyer. He came to make a god of the law. He did not think in terms of right and wrong, but of legal and illegal. It did not matter how the heart fared, so long as the law was right.

Nor was his worship a petty or trivial thing; he saturated his mind with precedents and commentaries, until at last he came to know more about his god than any other Englishman. And he could be a martyr for his religion. So that when James proclaimed the divine right of kings, he found himself confronted with another divine right—of the laws. This was a doctrine better calculated to appeal to members of Parliament. For they stood upon their ancient English liberties, and here was the great judge to tell them that these liberties were based on a foundation as sure as that of the throne itself. To this extent they were ready to follow Coke's lead, but their objects and his were poles apart.

The old lawyer would have made the judges the arbitrators between King and Parliament, and sovereignty would have spoken from the bench instead of from the throne. To the enthusiasm of the reformed faith, or any

patriotism distinct from the maintenance of the law, Coke was irresponsive, for though he could indulge in a violent forensic attack upon Spain, he could with equal facility accuse Sir Walter Raleigh, of all people, of being in Philip's pay, and hound that hero to the block without the least tinge of remorse, It was legal.

Surely this ascendancy of Coke's was, for all his own learning and the earnestness of his following, one of the most conspicuous instances in history of the blind leading the blind towards a catastrophe, from which both would have recoiled in horror !

We turn to Coke's lifelong enemy, also a lawyer, and the greatest of all champions of divine right and king-craft. We need hardly say that we refer to Sir Francis Bacon. He is a man whose attainments posterity has delighted to honour, to an extent strangely out of proportion to anything he achieved. He no doubt owes part of his reputation to the fact that the cause for which he argued has become more popular with posterity than with his own generation, or rather that he voiced a tendency which was just beginning to gain strength.

To talk of him as the founder of modern science is at best to state only part of the truth. The method of the "Novum Organum" was not that of Newton or Darwin. The rule of thumb by which Baconian science would proceed implies the absolute denial of the imagination, and it is, after all, by a faculty akin to the poet's that even the chemist and mathematician have made their discoveries. True science makes her conquest of the unknown by the methods of Napoleon, and not those of Marshal Daun; often have her flying columns turned the flank of the strongest position, or her cavalry dashed down upon some fastness in the enemy's rear and made his position untenable. It is for the patient infantry of the reserve to reduce, by sap and parallel, each isolated garrison left behind.

Bacon's title to fame lies in the amount of necessary destruction that he accomplished. If he did not point the way he at least cleared it. Whatever may be the fallacy of his method, no one can read the "Novum Organum" without instinctively recognizing that here is one of the world's masterpieces, and no scientist, even nowadays, can afford to neglect its counsels. But Bacon did too much and too little. Too little, because, though he could destroy, he did not rightly know how to construct. Too much, because the tendency of his work is to extend the reign of the scientific method over the whole field of human knowledge. True, Bacon himself was a God-fearing man, and did not even believe that any one could be a sincere atheist, but the tendency of his system was to make a rigid distinction between matters of faith and matters of fact, and to give sanction to the subsequent practice of Hobbes and Hume, who were ready enough to do homage to the name of God, provided He were kept out of the universe. Modern materialists generally recognize Bacon as one of the authors, if not the finisher, of their unfaith. But the most damning indictment ever levelled at him was the praise of Macaulay, who hailed him, in a pæan of Whig jubilation, as having ousted philosophy from her throne, and substituted experimental science. Bacon demolished the tyranny of the schools, but to what purpose, if it were only to set in its place another tyranny more grinding than the first? We should prefer to go wrong with St. Thomas Aquinas.

Bacon did not exclude human society from the operation of his method, and to this extent he may be called the father of modern Sociology. Philosophy, which is to him merely the ultimate generalization from the whole field of experience, includes human philosophy, which includes civil knowledge, this in its turn includes prudence in government, till at last we come to the doctrine of enlarging the bounds of empire, which is obviously

another name for kingcraft. Upon the details of this art Bacon is curiously silent, excusing himself, on the ground that it would be presumption in him to instruct such a past-master as James. But from other parts of his works, and from his letters, we can form a tolerable idea of what he meant by prudence in government.

However much he may have excelled him in practice, Bacon was in sympathy with the political theory of James. He did not, however, repose his sympathy upon the mystical sanction of a divine right, though he acknowledged its truth. He is one of a group of thinkers of whom the most prominent, next to himself, is Jean Bodin. These men hinged their political theory upon the conception of a strong and unfettered central power, and are the direct successors of Machiavelli. In every important State, save England, their doctrine was triumphant. In France the States-General met, during the reign of James, for the last time save one; in Spain popular liberties had been crushed; Emperor Ferdinand, though he could not consolidate the Empire, did at least make himself supreme in Austria and Bohemia; while the Empire itself, with the exception of the Free Cities, and Italy, with the exception of Venice, were geographical expressions for a number of despotisms. The age of constitutional experiments was over; unity and not liberty was the thing needful.

In England the work of unification had been accomplished already by the Tudors. To what an extent they succeeded in disciplining the nation, may be seen from one instance. In Henry VII's time it had been hardly possible to collect a single tax without a revolt, even after Parliament had sanctioned it. In the time of the Stuarts, Parliament could be dispensed with for eleven years, Archbishop Laud prosecute his reforms in the teeth of national sentiment, and ship-money be collected, without any revolt more violent than that of Hampden

in the law courts, and the emigration to Holland and America. Only when Parliament itself levied war against the King did any part of the nation rise and mutiny. This transformation had been accomplished, as if by a miracle, without destroying a single liberty, and without putting into the hands of the sovereign the means of making himself a tyrant.

Bacon had been trained in the school of Burleigh and Elizabeth, and had seen their principles crowned with victory. It was therefore natural that he should have inclined towards the system of the Tudors. But there is another reason, even more potent, for his inability to adapt his mind to changed conditions. His own method of thought was against him. His idea was to collect as many data as possible from the study of the past, and to proceed, by induction, to abstract from them laws of human action which should hold good for the future. Of this he fights shy in his "Advancement of Learning," but he is true to his principles in The Essays. There would be more to be said for this method, if the progress of society were mechanical, and not, as it is, creative. Bacon's method involves the denial of the creative imagination, and his immense knowledge of the past serves him ill, when it is his task to gauge a present situation.

In another respect, Bacon was unqualified to deal with the deeper emotional forces that mould the destiny of nations. He was essentially a cold-hearted man. Those who read Pope's estimate of him as the "wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind" may be tempted to ask whether it does not involve a contradiction. It is not possible for a man to be supremely wise and also very mean. But mean Bacon undoubtedly was; even those who defend him most stoutly only emphasize the pettiness of his nature. The main charge against him in his impeachment was that he sold justice for bribes. His modern defenders

admit that he took the bribes, but deny that he allowed them to influence his decisions. In other words, Bacon was not only, by his own admission, a corrupt judge, but, by the testimony of his apologists, he even swindled the unfortunate wretches whom he allowed to corrupt him. Again, it has been held that in his conduct of Essex' trial he was in the right. Perhaps—but who with a heart in his bosom could have stooped, deliberately and callously, to thrust home the fatal point against his friend and benefactor, whose case might have moved him to pity had he been a very enemy! Was not the brutal invective of Coke enough for justice against the friendless, fallen hero? And, finally, can we conceive the wisest of mankind fawning, as Bacon did, at the feet of Buckingham?

It was impossible that such a little earthy soul could inform the brain of a Solomon, or that it could rise to a generous and clear-sighted estimate of mankind. Here is his counsel to James for the summoning of his 1614 Parliament, the most intractable and soonest dissolved of them all. "That opposition which was in the last Parliament to your majesty's business, as much as was not ex puris naturalibus but out of party, I conceive to be now much weaker than it was, and that party almost dissolved. Yelverton is won; Sandes is fallen off; Crew and Hyde stand to be serjeants; Brooke is dead; Nevell hath hopes; Barkeley I think will be respective; Martin hath money in his purse; Dudley Digges and Holys are yours." These are the calculations, not of a philosopher and a statesman, but of a party boss, who thinks that every man has his price, and that the best way to silence an opposition is to nobble its leaders. Bacon's calculation, besides being characteristically mean, turned out to be quite wide of the mark.

We find him, at the height of his power and reputation, deluding his master with a fool's paradise. He assures

James on New Year's Day, 1618, that he is the best of all possible rulers over the best of all possible peoples. The Church is "illightened with good preachers, as an heaven of stars," the judges, the nobility, the Council, the gentlemen and justices of the peace, all that they should be; James' servants in awe of his wisdom; the country changing from desert to garden, the City from wood to brick; the merchants embracing the whole compass of the globe; peace at home, opportunity abroad, and the succession to the throne sure. To do Bacon justice, we must add that he advises James to make the situation quite perfect by putting his financial affairs in order, but for all that, there is no reason to believe that the Chancellor's rosy estimate was not sincere. It was just what would have been likely to have proceeded from a man of brilliant intellect, but little imaginative sympathy. It was quite true that the country was thriving economically, that it was tolerably governed, and to all outward appearances prosperous and contented. What forces were at work beneath that untroubled surface, what fire was smouldering in the heart of the nation, Bacon could not and did not know. Some intimation he received when he was hurled, as if by the first breath of a whirlwind, from the pinnacle of his greatness to disgrace and penury.

Yet we must not be guilty of belittling the combined learning and ingenuity which Bacon brought to bear upon the problems of State. If we must allow him to be among the fathers of modern social "science," he was at least not wholly its dupe. His stores of learning, and his practical experience of affairs and men, sufficed to save him from the worst consequences of his method. So far as the maxims of kingcraft were capable of exposition, they could never have had an abler exponent. If James had been of Bacon's advice, he would have kept clear at least of his grosser follies. Bacon saw the importance of

conciliating Parliament, and would even have counselled vigorous action in the case of the Palatinate. In the paper he prepared on the prospects of war with Spain, he takes a view so optimistic as quite to forget that the navy of 1620 was not that of Elizabeth. His political essays, especially the one on the true greatness of kingdoms, are packed close with observations as acute as any in "The Prince"—he saw, for instance, the importance of sea power, he is among the earliest advocates of colonization, and he realized the decay that consumes nations which have lost the experience of war. Nor is he a champion of class tyranny, for he sees that a proletariat which has been drilled into a too implicit obedience by its social superiors will prove a broken reed in the day of battle. He is therefore in favour of the Government exerting all its power to keep an undiminished class of small owners on the land.

The phrase of an ingenuous modern journalist would afford a singularly happy description of Bacon's political system. He was a believer in "a business Government." His ideal monarch was Henry VII, who was certainly, if ever there was one, a business king. All Bacon's political essays are written from the standpoint of the manager in a very large and complex establishment. But throughout, there is not a sentence that would entitle him to rank as a statesman, as distinct from a consummate politician. Because his wisdom was of the surface, because he could not understand what was in the nation's soul, he might almost dispute with his master for the title of the most learned fool in Christendom. He was less able to judge of the signs of the times than such rough and ready sages as Cowell and Tom Tell Troath.

Bacon was not of the stuff of which patriots are made. His lukewarm and petty temperament was not capable of coming under the sway of any overmastering, unselfish passion. In the most important of his books he

thus describes the three degrees of ambition : " First, that of men who are anxious to enlarge their own power in their country, which is a vulgar and degenerate kind ; next, that of men who strive to enlarge the power and empire of their country over mankind, which is more dignified, but not less covetous ; but if one were to endeavour to renew and enlarge the empire of mankind in general over the universe, such ambition (if it may be so termed) is both more sound and more noble than the other two." Thus eloquently does Bacon profess his allegiance to that cosmopolitan ideal, whose devotees have ever been men of brain rather than spirit. His "New Atlantis" is little more than a glorified science school. And yet, from time to time, he gives evidence of a prudent and Laodicean love for England. In the first year of James' reign he assigns as one of his reasons for entering the service of the State that he had thought that " a man's own country has some special claims on him more than the rest of the world."

It will hardly be necessary to point out that this one defect of Bacon's, his lack or coldness of patriotism, would of itself be sufficient to demolish, crushingly and for ever, the suggestion that he was the author of Shakespeare's plays. That the crafty schemer of real life, the Machiavelli of The Essays, and the avowed cosmopolitan of the " Novum Organum," could have created a Henry V, a John of Gaunt or a Volumnia, is a suggestion so monstrous that it might well make us doubt the sanity or the good faith of those who advance it, had we not experience of the absurdities in which erudition is content to wallow when unquickened by divine fire.

The Commons knew not what they did, but even when they murdered Strafford, they did not strike a more deadly blow at the prerogative than when they impeached Bacon. He was the one man among James' courtiers who could, by any conceivable possibility, have maintained the Tudor system in the face of a hostile or cajoled

nation; and this he could only have done at the price of national ruin. When he was gone, the position of James was dismal. He had missed his golden opportunity, and having missed it, he was worse off than before. The nation was at last beginning to understand that there was a fundamental opposition between its own welfare and the pretensions of royalty. It had needed a great deal of demonstration, for, even as late as 1620, nothing is more noticeable than the willingness of Parliament to follow a lead from the King, if it were only vouchsafed. Long-winded lectures, mystification, and the cold shoulder were all they were likely to get from their leader.

Hitherto, James had at least the advantage of a counsellor who was able to impart some strength and intelligence to his Government. First it had been Salisbury, and then Bacon, but now that both were gone the star of Buckingham was supreme, save for that of the worldly-wise bishop, Williams, to whose influence must be ascribed the ostrich-like injunction to the clergy, forbidding them to preach in any controversial sense, anti-Papist or anti-Puritan. Not so do earnest men compose questions of vital import. But the accession of Charles relegated Williams to comparative obscurity, and Buckingham was left without a rival. The third decade of the century might almost be described as the reign of King Steenie. Poor Buckingham has been the subject of much abuse, and perhaps more than he has deserved. His quick decision, his energy, his sudden and splendid generosity, his buoyancy of spirit in the face of every reverse, and the charm that he could exercise over those with whom he came in contact, should be placed to his credit. After all, it is no small thing that a parvenu should have imposed his own will upon those of two successive kings. We admire Buckingham as we do some gorgeous fritillary sailing among the flowers on a summer's afternoon, but it was not for those delicate wings to emulate the flight

of the golden eagle. Buckingham was just such a hero as we may expect to find amongst a luxurious and decaying society, which has forgotten what heroism means. He was, in fact, a hero of melodrama. Gallant and imperious, the pink of chivalry, he had studied the part to perfection. Now he is dashing off to Spain with a princely lover, to carry by storm the heart of the Infanta; now he is outdazzling Louis himself in the midst of Paris, nay, stealing the love of his queen; now he is putting himself at the head of a popular movement too long repressed by his master, throwing himself upon the sympathy of the people, and tarring them on against their old enemy; now he is at the head of his troops, sharing their hardships, sleeping on the bare ground, stiffening up the courage of the raw levies by his own enthusiasm. He is above pettiness, he scorns to flatter and temporize with an opponent, but tells him he will do him all the harm he can, and the next moment is too magnanimous to let him suffer a pecuniary loss that he thinks unfair. Failure is a word he does not know. Was ever man better suited for the part of stage hero? James himself thought so when he spoke of his son and Steenie as being like two knights in a romanso.

Coleridge has observed of Beaumont and Fletcher's heroes, that they are "strange self-trumpeters." There is more than an accidental connection between the unreality that pervades the Court drama, and the tinsel chivalry of the Court hero in action. Buckingham's fine qualities had no roots in reality. He did not understand that the real heroes have only risen to their eminence after toil and failure enough to break the heart of an ordinary man. The books do not show this. They allow us to see Achilles, swift-footed and invincible, driving the Trojans like sheep before him, but they tell not of the long months and years that Achilles must have spent in acquiring that deadly accuracy of aim,

of what abstinence and panting labour went to purchase that swiftness of foot. Whistler was asked in court whether he wanted two hundred guineas for a picture he had composed in a couple of days. "I ask it," he replied, "for the knowledge of a lifetime."

This was just the aspect of heroism which Buckingham could not understand. He really thought that it was possible for him to conquer armies, and sway the destinies of nations, as easily as his pretty face had won the maudlin affection of James. So he failed in everything he undertook. It was a brilliant idea to ride to Madrid, had not the object of the journey been impracticable; it was splendid to command the sympathy of a nation, impossible to retain it without humility and competence; it was a fine thing to levy war in a good cause, it was the sin of murder to do so without reckoning the means. But Buckingham, like all heroes of melodrama, made a virtue of pride. He was too great a man to take precautions, it was shame to defer to the susceptibilities of lesser mortals.

Whatever else may be said against the Parliament, it was made up of men who had little use for such counterfeit metal. For the most part they were grave and unpretentious gentlemen, narrow-minded perhaps, but grimly in earnest. It was not long before the glitter had worn off, and the popular Duke became the best-hated man in the country. A fatal act had opened the beginning of the new reign. The young King, jilted by his first love, had consoled himself, by his friend's advice, with a consort of the House of Bourbon. "Marie," as her husband loved to call her, was a fascinating, irresponsible child, but youth and charm weighed for nothing with those Protestant squires against the fact that she was a Papist, and to make matters worse, the affair was hurried through, like the plot it was, before Parliament could meet to stop it. The bond of confidence was thus snapped

between King and people at the outset of his reign—never to be rejoined.

The tragedy was now almost inevitable, and we may hurry over its details. It is still the fashion of historians to discuss the question as to whether King or Parliament was in the right, and this is largely owing to the special pleading of Macaulay, that most eloquent falsifier of the past. As is habitual with him, he argues the question from a standpoint at once trivial and pedantic, and having assumed it, he puts the case with unblushing, and often slanderous, partiality. Judged by any formal standard, it is easy to show that the King was merely fighting for his undoubted rights against aggressive innovation. He had come to the throne, so the formal apologist may justly plead, committed to a costly war to which Parliament itself had urged him. But no sooner did he summon another Parliament than they not only refused him the means of retrieving his honour and theirs, but they sought to deprive him of the necessary means of carrying on the government. They engineered the country's shame by starving the forces in time of war; they refused to let the King carry out his pecuniary engagements with Protestant princes abroad; they sought to deprive him of the means of maintaining discipline among his troops; they even refused to sanction the customary duties at the ports, which had been fixed and levied since the time of Edward I. Foremost among their grievances was the King's refusal to sanction the persecution not only of Catholics, but of Anglicans who published views different from their own. They claimed the right to fetter the King in his choice of ministers, and their openly expressed hatred of Buckingham had played no small part in provoking his murder. Perhaps the most indefensible of all their proceedings was after the King had made the large and generous concessions embodied in the Petition of Right. Though he had granted the utmost of their

demands, the Commons did not even pause in their aggression; they persecuted Royalist divines; by a piece of brazen sharp practice they twisted the King's consent to their petition into the relinquishment of tonnage and poundage; finally they locked the doors of the House upon his messenger, and after a violent brawl, rushed through resolutions which came little short of a direct incitement to rebellion.

The Long Parliament itself, over whose early proceedings Macaulay waxes enthusiastic, does not present a spectacle upon which Englishmen can look back with any special pride. Their policy was deliberately to levy blackmail upon the King, by means of a foreign army encamped in the Northern Counties, for the Scots were still to all intents and purposes as alien to Englishmen as the Dutch and Brandenburgers of William III, and it had been the set purpose of a Parliament to maintain the separation of the two kingdoms.

One of their first acts was a judicial murder, none the less shameless because it was public. When it seemed unlikely that the evidence was strong enough to condemn Strafford upon the impeachment, they decided to waive the question of his guilt, and kill him by Act of Parliament. Even then, the King's assent was only obtained by an infuriated mob, who besieged the palace with the tacit approval, if not the connivance, of the parliamentary leaders. At the same time, and by the same means, the King was " peacefully persuaded " (to use an appropriate modern term) to pass an Act putting the House beyond the reach of its constituents. Even the attempted arrest of the five leaders was not unjustifiable, however tactless it may have been. The charge against them was true; there was, no doubt, an understanding between these members and the Scots army, and even had nothing of the sort existed, the Long Parliament was the last body which could have had any right to resent

the abuse of the word "treason," or the employment of violence. Besides, Charles was rightly and honourably afraid that if he held his hand any longer, the next victim would be his own wife.

For the later career of the Long Parliament few defenders can be found. Arrogance, cruelty and incompetence marked their proceedings. The murder of Strafford was very justice compared with the martyrdom of Laud, and it was only with difficulty that the House was dissuaded from having the venerable Archbishop cut down alive and disembowelled. Last of all, it degenerated into the wretched "Rump," at whose ignominious dismissal not a dog barked.

We have stated this, the Royalist side of the case, because until justice has been done to it, it is impossible to grasp the real meaning of the struggle between King and Parliament. The impression still prevails that the quarrel was between a lying tyrant and a band of noble-hearted patriots, defending their country's rightful liberties. There is singularly little to command any feeling warmer than respect towards the characters of the parliamentary leaders who survived Eliot. Hampden is the most attractive figure among them, but his character can hardly be said to rise above the dignified mediocrity of the important landowner. He was in no sense a genius. Even less plausibly could the word be used of Pym, a hard, narrow, uninspired man, with an indomitable will, and an unrivalled parliamentary talent in the narrower sense. The rest are little more than names, for we cannot fairly count Falkland, Hyde, or even Selden among their number. It was not in debate that Cromwell made his fame, or Fairfax, or Blake, or Milton.

Yet there is, about the parliamentary leaders, an element of grandeur which lends some colour to their reputation with posterity. They were defending the prescriptive rights of Englishmen against the domination

of a central power, they stood in the place of the barons of Runnymede. Hampden's fear, lest, in contributing to an illegal loan, he should be calling down upon himself the curses pronounced in Magna Carta, is typical of their attitude. The Rousseau of our Revolution was none other than Sir Edward Coke, with his precedents, and commentaries, and his faith, not in the divinity of man, but in the almost divine perfection of the Common Law. And perhaps, after all, the advantage is not wholly on the side of Jean Jacques; for the rights of man are, at the best, shadows and abstractions; whereas the prescriptive rights of Englishmen are the massive and venerable pillars of our greatness, expressive of a deeper wisdom than even philosophers may lightly comprehend.

When all has been said in support of the Royalist cause, there remains the fact that these parliamentary leaders went to Westminster with the immense majority of the nation enthusiastically in their favour, and that until the greater part of the prerogative had been swept away, the King had no backing outside an insignificant clique. It is impossible to assume a state of calculated wickedness on the part of the whole nation, and yet, to all outward seeming, there was little enough cause for complaint. While the other nations of the Continent had been plunged in war, we had enjoyed an unbroken spell of peace for more than a decade. Trade was never so prosperous, and wealth was increasing. Judged by the standard of the times, the government was singularly mild, and the demands made upon the pocket of the average citizen were very small. The Petition of Right had been strictly observed, and Charles was always careful to keep within the forms of law. He himself was virtuous and dignified. But for all that his people groaned beneath his sway. When he went to Oxford, in the hey-day of his personal government, even in that centre of loyalty the crowd maintained a sullen silence.

As Oliver St. John said, on a subsequent occasion, "Things must be worse before they are better."

The Tudor system was, in fact, outworn, and the nation was learning to look for leadership elsewhere than to the throne. Elizabeth and Henry VIII had been in touch with their people, Charles and James never were. A fatal opposition was set up between the Court on the one hand and the nation on the other, and while that lasted England remained inglorious, and, as it were, paralysed. It had taken the whole reign of James I for her to find this out, and the breaking-point was reached at the accession of Charles. The only remedy was that the royal and anti-national power must come down altogether, or undergo such pruning as no king was ever likely to countenance, except under compulsion. Most serious of all was the fact that the King had no sympathy with the growing Puritanism, which was the most vital element in the national being. That the Parliament or their leaders thus visualized the situation is not to be supposed. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of the English Revolution, the one which most distinguishes it from the French, is the almost total neglect of general principles among its leaders. Even Eliot, the most philosophic of them all, incurred the censure of his friends for favouring royalty overmuch in theory, just after he had been doing all in his power to make it impossible in practice.

As for Charles, he was blind and deaf to all but the formalities of the contention. True, there was the Puritan impulse behind the Parliament, and later, the old feeling of personal loyalty behind the King, but before the Civil War the leaders were like men swimming, borne along by strong currents whither they knew not.

Meanwhile the Court Party, the minority who still clung to the Elizabethan ideal, was showing every symptom of decay. The figure of Charles I has proved

one of the most baffling in history. There are those who, like Macaulay, would depict him as almost wholly contemptible, a heartless liar. Again, there is the Royal Martyr of the Eikon Basilike and the old Anglican rubric, the good King foully and unnaturally murdered by wicked men. "False witnesses did rise up against him, they laid to his charge things that he knew not. They rewarded him evil for good, to the great discomfort of his soul." The former estimate is certainly false, the latter does not tell the whole, or even the most important part of the truth. Charles was one of the most well-meaning men that ever sat on a throne, and in spite of statements to the contrary, he was scrupulous not to go beyond the letter of the law. He was a devoted husband, loyal unto death to the Church of which he was the sworn defender. Unlike his father, he was every inch a king, but not in all his glory was he seen to so much advantage as when he faced death with the dignity of a gentleman, and the meekness of a Christian:

> "He nothing common did, nor mean,
> Upon that memorable scene,"

was the tribute even of an enemy.

And yet, in spite of appearances, Charles was the true son of his father, and it was the father's besetting sin that dragged the son to ruin. He was devoid of imaginative sympathy, he lived in a world of his own creation, and he dealt, not with live men, but abstractions. He was without the power of grasping the real, as distinct from the formal, bearing of any situation. Nearly every step he took was theoretically defensible, but practically impossible. Even where he seemed to excel his father, the difference was fatal to the son. For his very dignity made men, who had tolerated James, his implacable enemies. For if James never understood men, he was at least very human himself. It would have been difficult for the starkest Puritan to have waged mortal strife

against such a kindly, shambling old fellow, and even the public executioner might not have had the heart to slay him. For if James declared himself a god, he did so in a most ungodlike way, and the long, rambling arguments addressed to his audience were a most eloquent confession of equality. But the attitude of Charles was really Olympian. This was the way in which he approached his newly elected third Parliament for a supply: "If you (which God forbid) shall not do your duties in contributing what the State at this time needs, I must, in discharge of my conscience, use those other means which God hath put into my hands. . . . Take not this as a threatening, for I scorn to threaten any but my equals." It would have been better for him even to have stuck to his father's patter about the cow and her tail, and we need not wonder that the Commons answered his settled scorn with chronic mutiny.

Indeed, we cannot help noticing how fatally the relations between King and Parliament are changed upon Charles' accession. Hitherto there had been friction, now there was to be open enmity. After the attempted arrest of the five members, a paper was thrown into his carriage, with the words, "To your tents, O Israel," and to this state of mind Charles, like Rehoboam of old, had driven the majority of his subjects. Even for his virtues he could get no credit. He was a sincere Protestant, but both he and his Archbishop were gravely suspected of secret alliance with the Scarlet Woman. The Court was a hotbed of Catholicism, there were Weston and Cottington and Bishop Montagu and the Queen herself. Ships of the English navy had been handed over to Louis and Richelieu to use against God's poor people in Rochelle, and it was no wonder that the Commons were not going to vote money for such work. In fact, under the Stuart regime, the nation had got utterly out of hand. Charles was not only short of cash, but he was not even able to

get Englishmen to fight for him. The very outset of the reign was marked by the most shameful incident in the records of our navy; Cadiz, the scene of our former triumph, was again attacked, and the attack was easily repulsed, not only through indiscipline, but through shameful cowardice. There must have been veterans in this fleet who had seen the days of Drake, and youths who were to survive those of Oliver, and yet the men who came between two such glorious epochs were unable to strike a blow for their country. There was something other than vital degeneracy at the root of such failure. The nation was out of tune with its leaders. It had less enthusiasm for the government of Charles, than the Saxon peasants had had for William Rufus. There was no longer the spectacle of an English sovereign riding down to Tilbury and bidding tyrants fear, but an inscrutable, un-English figure, whom his subjects understood not, and who did not understand them, riding through the streets of Oxford amid the pageantry of courtiers and the silence of the people.

It is tragic to think of the two devoted men, who identified themselves with Charles' government, and shared in its catastrophe. Posterity is at last coming to do justice to Strafford, though the name of Laud will probably never quite emerge from the mists of prejudice that have obscured it. Strafford we may regard as the last, and perhaps the ablest, statesman of the Tudor system. He believed in getting the country governed efficiently as the first object of statesmanship, and in the monarch as head of the Government. We see him striving, against hope and against the trend of his age, to bring the King into harmony with Parliament, and to put the monarch at the head of a united and willing nation. The attempt failed, as it was bound to fail, between the King on the one hand, and the hot-headed, reckless Eliot on the other. After this Strafford's career is of the nature

of a forlorn hope, valiantly undertaken, and persevered in till death. The King could not govern by consent, and it only remained for him to be enabled to govern somehow. It was but at the very end of Charles' personal government that Strafford was able to obtain the influence he deserved, and then the mischief had been done.

He was the direct successor of Burleigh, Salisbury and Bacon, his objects were substantially the same, his ability and character not inferior. His ideal was nothing if not noble. He and his friend, the Archbishop, meant that patriotism, and not the interests of any class, should be the driving force of the Government, and the object of their policy of "Thorough." It was this lofty impartiality that earned them their bitterest foes. It was upon the selfish magnate and the corrupt official that the hand of Strafford was heaviest, and the Church of Laud did not confine herself to the respectable task of correcting poor men's sins. But they were fighting for a lost cause, and their worst foe was their own master. Charles never fully trusted any one at all after Buckingham died; he would not allow a free hand to the churchman who would have purified his administration, nor to the statesman who would have kept him out of war.

After all, Strafford was contending against a stronger enemy than Pym or Hampden, for it was the spirit of England against which he was fighting. Though both he and his master protested with their last breath their allegiance to Parliament and the laws, the conception of government for which they stood was not English, but Roman; in the last resort they put the will of the prince before the rights of the subject, and aimed at uniform efficiency as the *summum bonum* of government. Strafford's policy in Ireland, for all its strength and brilliancy, had the fundamental defect of trying to govern Ireland by English ideas, benevolently to break her spirit by strong government, instead of tempering firmness by a reverent

study and fostering of Irish character. And when he came over to subdue Britain with an Irish army, it was not altogether without reason that he lost his head "for traitorously endeavouring to subvert the fundamental laws and government of the realms of England and Ireland, and instead thereof to introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical government against the laws." For though he was no traitor to his King, though his accusers were themselves guilty of aiding and comforting the King's enemies within his realm, he had sinned against the laws, against the genius of the Constitution. And he paid the penalty of Socrates.

With the nation prosperous and peaceful, and the murmurs of discontent stifled or unheard, it was only natural that the Court should work out its destiny, in spite of the efforts of these two earnest men, who would have grappled valiantly with a situation they did not understand. "Lady Mora" was the code-word which Strafford and Laud used in their correspondence, to describe the dull weight or resistance they encountered in the pursuit of "Thorough." Charles and his courtiers were like those patriarchal voluptuaries before the flood, they ate and drank, they married and were given in marriage, they took their bribes and coquetted with the false prophet, until a cloud arose out of the north and covered their whole heaven.

It was not a Court sunk in wickedness, like that of the Restoration, but merely frivolous and unready. Cottington and Weston, Noy and Finch, were the shadows who flitted about the stage, and above them all stood the pretty, light-hearted Queen. One incident will suffice to show what was the prevailing spirit among these men. The King wanted to make Richmond Park into a royal hunting ground, and with this object tried to buy out the owners of land within its precincts. One gentleman, however, refused to sell, whereupon the King started to build a

high brick wall round his considerable estate, a proceeding at once costly and iniquitous. Cottington, who saw the folly of the proposal, protested, but gave his facile assent. The Archbishop was made of different metal, and went to Cottington expecting his sympathy and help in dissuading the King, whereupon a furious quarrel ensued, Cottington actually accusing him of disloyalty for opposing the royal will. The King took the side of the flatterer and the rôle of Ahab, poor Laud was well snubbed for his pains.

In literature, too, in so far as it continues in the Elizabethan tradition, the same note of unreality prevails. The decline of the drama we have already traced, that of poetry is no less apparent. It is true that we have products of exquisite grace and delicacy, but the strength and substance are gone out of them; the hearty inspiration and joyous love that crowned the age of Shakespeare are changed into neat compliment and strained conceit. Perhaps the poet who suffers least from this decline is Herrick, in whom the spirit of Shakespeare's songs sometimes seems to live again. But the spirit which animates the two is very different. Herrick is weary at heart of the soil and its people, and he lusts after the hot, close atmosphere of the Court. To any one who knows the wild beauty of his Devonshire home, there is something peculiarly painful in his lines of savage abuse to a Dartmoor stream. Of any interest in other than purely individual matters, Herrick, except in one or two unimportant and sometimes cynical epigrams, displays no sign.

This is a feature that we shall find to be characteristic of early Stuart literature in general, where it is not touched by the growing Protestant enthusiasm. Poetry, like the drama, was becoming a toy, often pretty and daintily fashioned, but a thing only half serious. The nearer we are to the age of Elizabeth, the less removed

are we from the sources of inspiration. The poetry of Donne, with all its strange conceits and wrenching of sense and melody, is lit every now and then by rare and splendid gleams, like sunset rays stabbing through dark clouds. These become more fitful in his successors. We find men of real genius, like Carew and Habington, playing the game of compliment to impossible and colourless women, Celias and Castaras, and thereby squandering their best energies. A mole on the beloved's breast is transformed into a bee drowned in a drop of sweat, a kiss from her lips is useful as a cure for toothache.

It is only natural that such idolatry should alternate with equally conventional misogyny. From being angels, women are suddenly become monsters of pride, cruelty and treachery. Such is the characteristic pose of Suckling. Or else we are invited to be present at the hackneyed and unexciting amours of courtly shepherds and shepherdesses, who have lost the freshness of Sicily, and have not yet acquired the glamour of Versailles.

There is none of the glorious certainty of Elizabethan times; the hard and frigid rationalism of the eighteenth century had already begun to raise its head, and from Bacon it was an easy transition to Hobbes. Even religion itself is in too many cases a peg on which to hang bizarre festoons of conceit. Again, the fiery zeal of the Reformation is giving place to the temperate apologetic of controversialists like Hales and Chillingworth, men in whom an increase of tolerance goes along with a certain falling off of enthusiasm. On this side, the way is open to the respectable divines of a prose age, the Tillotsons and Warburtons of our Church. The sturdy patriotism of the Tudor reformed Church dies away in a drowsy loyalty, based upon divine right.

Sir Thomas Browne is perhaps the most remarkable literary figure of the age. His style is the very perfection of form without substance. Except in a very few

instances, he makes a point of keeping to the surface of any problem on which he may be engaged. He is pleasantly tolerant because the issues at stake are never vital. He does not preach to us, nor rudely disturb our complacency. We picture him as a humorous and kindly friend, who draws his chair closer to ours on a winter evening, and out of the spoils of his wide and various reading, weaves a thousand speculations as fascinating and unsubstantial as the landscapes among the coals.

We need hardly say that Browne's temperament naturally inclines him to the cosmopolitan standpoint. " I am no plant," he says, " that will not prosper out of a garden. All places, all airs, make unto me one country; I am in England everywhere and under any meridian." This is what we might expect, for Browne's Laodicean attitude provides no basis for patriotism. Nevertheless, we have signs that his indifference was modified by advancing years, for in the " Christian Morals," the work of his old age, we find him saying: " Be not an alien to thine own nation . . . feel something of thyself in the noble acts of thine ancestors, and find in thine own genius that of thy predecessors. . . . Add one ray unto the common lustre." This is different from the general tone of Browne's work.

Trial by battle is the supreme test of human ideals, and to this ordeal was the divine right of Charles I brought at last. Of our own Civil War, especially, it is plain beyond the shadow of doubt that this was no mere trial of strategy and tactics, but it was won and lost because one of the two parties had more spiritual fitness to win than the other, because an ideal had met with one stronger than itself, and was shivered to pieces. The forces that rallied round the King were animated by a spirit different from that of the levies for the Bishops' war, who had proved more dangerous to their officers than to the enemy.

and who had run away from Newburn Ford. The personal government of the King had hardly a single adherent in the country, and until this had been swept away, it had watched with approval the proceedings of the Long Parliament.

But when the Parliament threatened to set up a tyranny more grinding than the King's, and when from arrogance they proceeded to open treason, another sentiment was aroused amid the Royalist north and west. It was the old personal fealty to the King as such, the consciousness that it was deadly sin to lay hands upon the Lord's anointed. The feeling which animated the best cavaliers was beautifully expressed by Sir Edmund Verney, the King's standard-bearer at Edgehill. "For my part," he says, "I do not like the quarrel, and do heartily wish that the King would yield and consent to do what they desire, so that my conscience is only concerned in honour and in gratitude to follow my master. I have eaten his bread, and served him near thirty years, and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him; and choose rather to lose my life—which I am sure to do—to preserve and defend those things which are against my conscience to preserve and defend." Valiant knight and stainless gentleman, he died for that loyalty which it irked his conscience to maintain.

This is not the spirit that wins victories, torn between devotion to a master and disapproval of the cause, death is less of a sacrifice than a release. So Falkland felt, that most amiable and accomplished of all the King's party, who went about murmuring "Peace, peace!" and then rode wantonly upon his death, which, for an officer in the field, is itself an act of insubordination and treason. Poor Falkland scarcely knew which side to choose. There was something in him of Sir Thomas Browne, something that endowed him with the most charming of personalities, but made it impossible for him

to cross the border-line between prose and poetry. He had breadth without depth, he was without fire, without iron, without a star, in short, he was a hero of Matthew Arnold. Even less than Verney, was he a man to command victory for his cause.

It was not out of that ephemeral Court at Oxford that the salvation, or even the mastery of England could arise. Things had become worse, even, than before the Long Parliament. A reaction from the Puritan austerity was beginning to make a virtue of vice, and to prepare for the filth and heartlessness of the Restoration. There was about these men none of the solid earnestness that animated the Ironsides. They came and went at will, they were hardly amenable to discipline, they thronged the masques, sonneted some lady's eyes, wenched and duelled with a terrible light-heartedness. Reckless bravery was their chief virtue, but physical bravery by itself is a small thing, and does not distinguish men from brutes. Something more is required from the good soldier, and this very few of the cavaliers possessed. It is a fine thing to sweep down on the enemy at a gallop, and hunt him for miles, slashing and slaying, but it is finer to be able to draw rein in the moment of victory, to perform all those tedious and little-regarded duties which mark the difference between the real soldier and the amateur. Coolness, drudging self-sacrifice, and an invincible doggedness, are what constitute an army's fitness to win, and these again depend upon the spirit animating the men. A high certainty of the goodness of a cause is what makes soldiers able to be at once valiant and laborious, dashing and obedient.

Now the original Parliamentary army was no better than its enemy in this respect, but it had the enthusiasm of the Protestant cause on which to draw. It was the genius of Oliver Cromwell to have recognized this from the first, and to have created the most formidable

soldiery in the world out of picked God-fearing men. But the King had no such reserve on which to draw. His armies were recruited from the most backward and least civilized parts of the kingdom, and it was impossible to wean them from their local and sectional interests. Strategically the Royalist plans were better concerted, at the beginning of the war, than those of the Parliament, but they were always breaking down because the armies could never be brought to combine. The Cornishmen would not have the Plymouth garrison on their rear, nor were the Yorkshiremen willing to leave Hull unreduced. Furthermore, the Royalist strength, instead of being concentrated, was scattered over the defence of divers country houses, which had to be relieved, and which absorbed troops who might have been invaluable in the field.

However brilliantly the Royalists fought, they had never the least chance of winning. They found this true at the very outset, when Charles' advance on London aroused such an opposition as made attack hopeless. They found it the next year, when they could not get their local armies to manœuvre on a common plan. Their tactics suffered from the same defect as their strategy. At Edgehill, the Royalist horse had been less under control than the field at any decently managed fox-hunt, and even the King's reserve had joined in the mad and fatal gallop after Rupert. "The King's horse," says Clarendon, "though bold and vigorous upon action and execution, were always less patient of duty and ill-accommodation than they should be." Had the discipline been better, these hard-riding gentlemen and their retainers should never have let Essex escape from the trap in which they had him at Newbury. But they lost their advantage of position by "the precipitate courage of some young officers who had good commands, and who unhappily always undervalued the courage of the enemy."

That day the London prentice boys proved themselves of metal too tough to be broken by the headlong charges of Rupert, even as they had shown a capacity for self-sacrifice and endurance on their march to Gloucester, beyond the reach of their enemies. And when next morning they arose still doubtful of their retreat, they found that the less resolute army had melted from their path. After this trial it was only a question of time.

The system of Charles, the heritage of the Tudors, was in fact spiritually bankrupt, and in war it is spirit and not strategy that wins in the long run. Out of that tinsel Court the King was unable to provide leaders. Newcastle, one of the best of them, gave it up ignominiously after Marston Moor; Goring, the licentious reprobate, alienated whole districts from the King, was frankly playing for his own hand, and was more dangerous to his own side than to the enemy; Rupert was a foreigner, and a professional soldier of no mean order, for he had improved upon Pappenheim in the matter of shock tactics, but even he fought more like a knight-errant than a man set on final victory. Mad headlong rushes were all he could accomplish in the field, and perhaps all he could get out of the material at his command. When the Royalist charge was pushed home, friend and enemy alike disappeared from that part of the field; but when the Ironsides had routed the opposing wing, a few squadrons would be sent in pursuit, and the rest would halt and be at the disposal of their general. We know how, at Naseby, when there was yet a chance of the King's own horse retrieving the day, one of the earls snatched at His Majesty's bridle, and the whole troop scattered in a panic.

But what made it finally impossible for Charles to recover the allegiance of his subjects was the faintness of patriotism that he displayed. During the first troubles in the north, he had seriously entertained the project of employing Spanish veterans to subdue his Scottish

subjects. All through the war the evil influence of the Queen keeps asserting itself, and Charles recks not whither he looks for aid. Arms from Holland, men from Lorraine, the open support of all the Catholics in England, are equally welcome provided they subserve his immediate object of beating the Roundheads. To crown his misfortunes, his intrigues, through the capture of his cabinet at Naseby, are made the property of the nation. Truly this man, guilty or innocent, could be no King of England, and we can understand, if we cannot justify, the decision of those blunt and earnest soldiers, that "he, the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation, shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body."

But we cannot altogether condemn the sentiments of love and reverence that have gathered round his dignified and pathetic figure. No statesman or true patriot would have lived his life, no bad or petty man would have died his death. After his own fashion he loved his people, and there is even a touch of jingoism in his ordering the republication of Selden's "Mare Clausum," England's claim to the sovereignty of the seas, a book which James had suppressed. Only under pressure and in dire distress, did he consent to employ foreign troops on English soil, a thing his son would have done as a matter of course. And in that pathetic Carisbrooke poem which is attributed to him, he cries:

"Though we perish, bless this Church and State."

Whether he actually penned these words or no, we have no doubt that they were engraven on his heart, and we need not refuse at least our pity to this most unhappy king, for he is not too great to make our pity an impertinence.

# CHAPTER X

## THE PURITAN IDEAL

THOSE modern sages, who would explain all human actions by economic motives, must be sorely perplexed when they come to deal with the Puritan revolution. For never was England to all outward appearance more prosperous than on its eve.

Here we may let Clarendon speak: "The happiness of the times . . . was enviously set off by this, that every other kingdom, every other province, were engaged, some entangled, some almost destroyed, by the rage and fury of arms . . . whilst the Kingdoms we now lament were alone looked upon as the garden of the world," and he proceeds to enumerate our advantages, "the court in great plenty, or rather (which is the discredit of plenty) excess, and luxury; the country rich, and what is more, fully enjoying the pleasure of its own wealth, and so the easier corrupted by the pride and wantonness of it; the Church flourishing with learned and extraordinary men, and (which other good times wanted) supplied with oil to feed those lamps; and the Protestant religion more advanced against the Church of Rome by writing (without prejudice to other useful and godly labours) especially by those two books of the late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his grace, and of Mr. Chillingworth, than it had been from the Reformation; trade increased to that degree that we were the exchange of Christendom (the revenue thereof to the Crown being almost double that which it

had been in the best times) and the bullion of all other kingdoms brought to receive a stamp from the mint of England; all foreign merchants looking upon nothing as their own but what they had laid up in the warehouses of this kingdom; the royal navy in number and equipage much above former times, very formidable at sea; and the reputation of the King much more with foreign princes than any of his progenitors . . . lastly, for a complement to all these blessings, they were enjoyed by, and under the protection of, a King of the most harmless disposition, and the most exemplary piety, the greatest example of sobriety, chastity and mercy, that any prince hath ever been endowed with."

The substantial truth of this estimate is confirmed by the testimony of other observers, and in particular of Strafford. In one point certainly we may dissent from it, and this is in respect of foreign policy. To talk of Charles as if he were more respected abroad than Elizabeth or Henry V is the reverse of the truth. A crafty exponent of kingcraft, he had neither the men nor the money to give force to his schemes. Richelieu had contemptuously arrested his candidate for the command of the German Protestant army; Tromp had violated the sanctity of British waters, and destroyed a Spanish fleet under the very guns of our own. Not only had Charles no force to back his will, but he had no fixed will for any force to back. Under his leadership, England stood for nothing in the eyes of Europe, for no power and no ideal. She was dishonourably prosperous.

But that she had prospered from a material point of view cannot be denied. Never had trade flourished so much, never were taxes less oppressive. The most hated impositions, the abortive benevolence and the ship-money, were levied upon the rich, and the same was the case with the revival of forest claims, and other legal excuses for levying fines. As for the customs dues, these were very

light, and affected, at any rate directly, the pockets of the merchants. But the nation was concerned with something nobler than money grubbing. To be the fat man of Europe was a trivial ambition to an England which was smouldering with religious enthusiasm. One foreign event had deeply affected the national conscience. We had been compelled to watch the power of Rome exulting in triumph over the very home of the Reformation. The Palatinate had gone down, Denmark had gone down, and we had done nothing.

But then, out of the north, came a champion such as England had aspired in vain to produce, and the invincible Tilly had his sword, still reeking with the blood of Magdeburg, broken in his hands upon the plain of Breitenfeld. When Gustavus died, the news seemed too bad to be true, and at first it was not believed in England. But his career had had its effect here, as well as in Germany. It had gone far, by contrast, to emphasize the ignoble part that this country was being compelled to play under Charles, and it did something to turn men's minds from international to civil strife. For the blow had been struck, and henceforward the dream of Catholic domination sinks into obscurity. The Thirty Years' War was now becoming a weary and cruel faction fight, without any ideals whatever, to be terminated at last, in favour of the Protestant side, by a Catholic power. England was out of the European system, and her neighbours had enough on their hands already.

So that in the early stages of the Civil War, in the songs and pamphlets on either side, direct patriotic appeals play but a small part. That the bishops shall come down, or the King enjoy his own again, are typical of their sentiments, and the Puritans themselves are more concerned with setting up their own special form of religion, than devising schemes for making England great and prosperous.

Indeed, from the purely patriotic standpoint, there was much to be said for this attitude. The soul of England was, according to the view implicitly held by all sections of Puritans, off the right track, like Christian and Hopeful when they took the easy path through the land of Giant Despair. The first thing to be done, in the familiar language of the modern Dissenter, was to get right with God. England, under the Stuart regime, was indeed in Doubting Castle; her armour was laid aside, and it was a little thing that the Giant gave her plenty to eat. The Key of Promise was first needed to unlock the gate, and then, but not till then, could she go on, refreshed and in full armour, upon the road of her pilgrimage.

And yet it is one of the piteous facts of history, that the man against whom the hottest of this ardour was directed was not only an able, hard-working statesman, but almost a saint. This is no place to enter upon a detailed vindication of Archbishop Laud, not only from the scurrility of Macaulay, but from the measured unfairness of Gardiner. To talk of him as a ridiculous old bigot is more significant of the character of the abuser than that of the abused. The naïve and unassuming way in which, in his letters and private diary, he talks of his dreams, and the trivial occurrences of his everyday life, makes us love him the more, and reminds us of the diary of another great High Churchman, the "bright and beautiful" Hurrell Froude. His deeply religious nature made him suspect even in little things the hand of God; he lived encompassed by a great cloud of witnesses, and in the humble spirit of a little child, he refused to put aside even dreams as unworthy of his notice. And this man could be as dignified as the King himself when occasion demanded; he could pursue the policy he had chosen, with the most comprehensive and consummate ability. Nor was he any respecter of persons; he could oppose the

injustice of the King, and his tactless impartiality made him as many enemies as his zeal.

Gardiner's charge of formalism is not the verdict of history, but the dregs of Puritan prejudice. Who, reading Laud's prayers, could have the heart to sustain it for a moment? And who, having followed his career to its close, through durance and martyrdom, can refrain from indignation that such can still be the verdict of good men? When Strafford was leaving the Tower on his last journey, he passed under Laud's window, and begged of his old friend the last favour it was possible for him to bestow. The Archbishop stretched forth his hands in blessing, and fell fainting to the ground, while the Earl, with bowed head, murmured "Farewell, my Lord. God protect your innocency!" But when he himself came to die, Laud displayed neither fainting nor weakness. There was the solemn and unforced calm in his demeanour that is natural to men who have lived so long in God's eye, that they regard death merely as the passing into another room. He preached his own funeral sermon with as entire an absence of theatricality as if he had been in his own pulpit at Canterbury. He concluded with a dying prayer which is only second in our language to that of Cromwell himself. "Since Thou art pleased to try me to the utmost," runs one passage, "I humbly beseech Thee, give me now, in this great instant, full patience, proportionable comfort, and a heart ready to die for Thine honour, the King's happiness, and the Church's preservation. . . . Amen, Lord Jesus, amen, and receive my soul into Thy bosom! Amen." Such was the man whom two of the most respected of our historians have branded, respectively, as a ridiculous old bigot, and a formalist.

We must not dwarf the stage of history, nor, because the Archbishop was wrong, deny him the title of a great and good man. He found the Anglican system, as it had been established under Elizabeth, going to pieces before

forces deeper and stronger than its own. So he determined, like the brave old pilot he was, not to desert the ship, but to do all he could by firmness and skill to keep her taut and afloat. He had an ideal of Church policy, which is expressed in the phrase so frequently on his lips, the " beauty of holiness." He desired, like Henry VIII, and to a less extent Elizabeth, to keep the advantages of the Roman Catholic discipline under an English King, instead of an Italian Pope. He believed that, by means of ceremonies, the path to grace might be made easier, and sudden conversions, with the consequent rigid line between the saved and the damned, were no part of his system. Hence the Arminianism, or belief in free will, with which his name is associated. For if God, from the beginning of the world, has already divided the sheep from the goats, the idea of salvation as a gradual, and in any sense a voluntary process, is untenable. Pervading all this is the Tudor idea of ordered discipline, the Law of Hooker, which was of the essence of Laud's churchmanship.

The Church of England was never so rich in all kinds of talent as under his auspices. Some of her most brilliant controversialists, her most gifted men of letters, graced the reign of Charles. Herbert's " Temple " showed her parish system at its best, and Clarendon's estimate seemed justified by her fruits. But there can be no doubt that throughout the reign, the Church was profoundly and increasingly unpopular. It was upon this rock that Charles' third Parliament split, and the growing tide of discontent might be gauged by the demeanour of the crowd round the pillory of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton, or the ominous words put by Milton into the mouth of " the pilot of the Galilean lake." Devout men were emigrating in their hundreds to Holland or distant America. Laud was building his system upon a volcano.

In fact, the Church was so closely bound up with the

Tudor system, that "no Bishop—no King" was a true proverb. Slavish loyalty, rather than patriotism, was her political creed. The King was the Lord's anointed, and it behoved his subjects to obey him blindly under all circumstances. This was well enough when the sovereign was an Elizabeth or even a Henry VIII, but when the King was a cat's-paw for Buckingham or Henrietta Maria, when the Government was out of touch with popular feeling, divine right became a blasphemous excuse for acquiescence in human wrong. To emphasize the anti-national tendency of the Church's policy, her leaders were under the suspicion of coquetting with Rome. As regards Laud and Charles himself this was an unmerited slander, but to the plain man there was much to justify it. One bishop actually went over; some of the most prominent courtiers were tainted with the infection; a papal agent glided about the Court hatching no man knew what nefarious schemes; the Queen was an open Papist. The hatred with which Rome was regarded can hardly be conceived of nowadays, when Guy Fawkes has degenerated into a guy, and the tower of a Roman Catholic Cathedral vies with several chimneys as the most prominent eyesore in London. Nothing was too bad for a Papist. The Lords and Commons of James had vied with each other in inhumanity to the unfortunate priest Floyd, for a trivial insult offered to the Electress Palatine. When the Roundheads had stormed a garrison, they were humane according to the standard of the time, except to any unfortunate priests who might be taken. These were piously strung up out of hand. The storming of the Catholic Basing House was one of the most savage episodes in the English war.

Nothing, then, could have been more fatal than the suspicions that inevitably gathered around the Court. Not the least damaging of these was caused by Laud's encouragement of Arminianism. This was, to the average

devout Protestant, flat reaction. The free-will controversy was one of the main lines of cleavage between Rome and Geneva, and here was the Archbishop, with his Romanist love of ceremony, openly giving it countenance. To the anxious Puritan there could be but one interpretation of these signs, and one step between this and Rome. Had not Parliament locked its doors and held down its Speaker to the chair that it might denounce this Arminian heresy? Might not the stake be the sequel to the pillory? To your tents, O Israel!

Never before or after this epoch in our history had policy been determined so entirely by religious motives. Ordinary considerations were put aside. This is especially noticeable in our relations with the Dutch. The efforts of Charles to enforce our sovereignty of the seas met with hardly any response among his subjects, except so far as they objected to paying for the fleet, which went cruising about under Lord Lindsey and doing nothing in particular. Even when the Scots invaded England and sat down in Yorkshire, their proceedings were regarded with more satisfaction than otherwise. On the other hand, the revolt of the Irish roused real and vengeful indignation; but then the Irish were Papists, and hardly regarded as human beings at all. Woe betide the unfortunate Irishman or Irishwoman who fell into Puritan hands! But it is to be noticed that both in the case of the Dutch and the Scots, English antipathy was only dormant. The massacre of Amboina, and many another injury to traders, was unavenged; the old prejudice against the Scots was not dead, but at present there were more important things to think about. There would come a time for paying off old scores.

At present the dominant part of the nation was possessed by one idea, which was to garner the harvest of the Reformation. The desire for unfettered communion with God had grown to a passion. Ceremonies of every

kind were merely dark or coloured curtains spread between the believer and God. Those who have watched a revival meeting will know the transports of enthusiasm into which a whole audience can be lashed by the idea of getting right with God. Just such a wave of enthusiasm was now possessing the nation, and is the explanation of all the strange and sometimes grotesque religious manifestations of the 'forties and 'fifties. These it is not our purpose to explore, but we shall try to make it clear what were the general principles underlying them.

It is noticeable that the body of men who had negotiated the early stages of the Revolution had no wish to see Puritan principles pushed to an extreme. They only desired to pull down the Church, in order to establish the more tyrannous and grinding Presbyterian uniformity. To men like Prynne, persecution was no evil in itself, except when Prynne and others of his persuasion were the victims. He argued, logically enough, that if the truth were known, it ought to be enforced. It has been well remarked that whereas Episcopacy represented the monarchial, so English Presbyterianism represented the aristocratic principle of Church government. Hence it was, even without the intervention of the Scots, the most likely to commend itself to the Long Parliament. They were anything but a democratic body either in theory or practice, being composed almost entirely of important and wealthy gentlemen. It was under their auspices that a nominated assembly of divines endeavoured to saddle the nation with a uniformity, which broke down as soon as it was attempted to put it into practice. England made the discovery of Milton, that "new presbyter" was "old priest" writ large.

It is obvious that the Westminster system was, from the extreme Puritan standpoint, only a shade better than that of Laud. All systems imposed upon the believer

from the outside were necessarily barriers between him and God. He did not need the aid of synods and Westminster Catechisms to enable him to fly to the feet of Emmanuel. His salvation and the method of its attainment was a matter between him and his Maker. If the Anglican compromise had failed to stem the impulse of the Reformation, there was no hope for the Presbyterian stopgap. And so the passion for salvation bursts all bounds, and branches into a score of wild and eccentric forms—Ranters, Muggletonians, Fifth Monarchy Men.

The mastery lay neither with the Trimmers nor the Extremists, but with the Independents, to whom Cromwell and Milton came to belong. These men accepted not the nation, nor yet the man, but the congregation as their unit of government. Where two or three were gathered together, Christ was in the midst of them. The ecclesiastical system which Cromwell established was the practical application of this idea, and the country was soon covered with a patchwork of congregations, whose religious complexion depended largely upon the private opinions of the pastor, though a certain amount of restraint was imposed upon scandal and too outrageous heresy.

The Puritan spirit was now at its height, and strenuous were the efforts made to realize to the full the opportunity of a final harvesting of the Reformation. No vision was too dazzling to captivate excited imaginations. The Fifth Monarchy men seized upon the idea of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and thought that the fifth kingdom, the stone which was to shiver gold and silver and brass and iron, was now at hand. The Diggers were fired by the idea of communal land-holding, and tried to inaugurate the Millennium that way. The passion for getting rid of everything that might conceivably stand between the Christian and Christ developed often into very mania. Some enthusiasts were so far carried away that they even

stripped themselves of their clothes, and addressed their audiences stark naked. Works of art, often of priceless value, were destroyed because they savoured of idolatry. The same impulse dictated war against all kinds of pleasure, even the most innocent. The origin of the Puritan Sunday, and the gloom which descended upon the Merrie England of the Tudors, was plausibly connected with such injunctions as "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out," and "Forsake all and follow me." It is only in the hands of lukewarm and self-righteous men that it has become one of the most detestable forms of heresy.

Indeed, it was only the white heat of enthusiasm that could sustain a creed unfortified by ceremony or system. This is the glory and the weakness of the extreme Puritan ideal. It assumes a community of saints. The gradual and delicate process by which the soul is coaxed, as it were, into holiness, was to the Puritan but the trappings of idolatry. A measureless reliance upon God's power, and utter self-abandonment to His grace, were sufficient unto salvation. It was at this entire submission that the Puritan really aimed when he denied free will, though he always left open, implicitly, the freedom to submit. In another sense, however, he claimed a freedom which the Catholic would have severely limited. By entering into a state of grace, he had absolved himself from the bondage of the law, and the more conservative Presbyterians were alarmed by the appearance of preachers who seemed to repudiate even the obligations of morality.

This is not inconsistent with the fact that the very men who were most vehement for the liberty of the elect, were agreed in imposing the most absolute and petty moral tyranny that has ever weighed upon the people of this country. They not only denied themselves the pleasures of this world, but they forbade them to others. For they recognized only two classes of people—the elect and the worldlings. The saints were too much occupied

with their salvation to dance or profane the sabbath, however free they might be in theory; whilst those who were in bondage to Satan had no claim upon the privilege of the elect.

The danger of such an attitude is obvious, and we have pointed it out in a previous chapter. Spiritual pride, impenetrable and untouched by charity, was the besetting sin of all Puritans. Only Cromwell, with his magnificent simplicity and sincerity, shook himself almost free from it, and we know how Cromwell, with a humour not too common among his fellow-enthusiasts, put to shame even the saintly George Fox, who had been bold enough, in the power of the Lord, to exhort the Protector to lay down his crown at the feet of Jesus, and had been properly scandalized when Cromwell came over and sat on the table, saying that he would be as tall as his admonisher.

But even Cromwell was not exempt from the vice he thus gently rebukes in another, and his terrible satisfaction over the "I burn, I burn" of the poor officer at Drogheda shows a trait that happily was seldom dominant. With Milton the fault was only too conspicuous, and goes far to detract from the sublimity of his character. The horrible self-righteousness which marred his domestic relations appears even in the God and angels of "Paradise Lost." Sometimes his nature seems quite emptied of charity. He had none of the generous sympathy of Marvell for the sufferings of King Charles, but pursued him even to the scaffold, with a malice almost as fiendish as that of the deity who provokes his opponent to fresh crimes in order to afford himself an excuse for inflicting fresh punishment. When he, John Milton, had driven his child-wife to seek the sanctuary of her home, he discovered that God had sanctified divorce. Such armour as this was impenetrable. If the greatest of the elect did not escape the infection, what hope could there be for lesser men? The *reductio ad absurdum* of Puritanism

had been demonstrated long before "Hudibras" was written. John Naylor had, with perfect consistency, found himself to be so imbued with the spirit of Christ, that he caused divine honours to be paid to himself, or Christ in him, and rode into Bristol in blasphemous imitation of the final entry into Jerusalem.

But to compensate for this blemish, the Puritan movement had engendered an awful strength. It had opened up what was nearly a new prospect to its adherents, for it taught them to dive into the recesses of their own souls. With all its glories, the Elizabethan age can hardly be called introspective. In the bulk of its literary output it is concerned with action, and not with thought, with doing, and not with being. In how few of the dramas do we find the interest centring round the development of character! A Prometheus, an Oedipus, an Iphigenia in Aulis, are characters inconceivable on the stage of Marlowe or Webster, Chapman or Fletcher. Violent action had naturally offended the taste of the Greek, he liked it to take place behind the scenes; but the boards of the "Globe" were frequently covered with corpses, which were carried out to the tune of dead marches. The clash of swords was more congenial to the taste of an English pit than the conflict of motives. Again, in the love poems and sonnet sequences of which the age is so prolific, the emotions of the lover are usually of the most plain-sailing, and even conventional nature. Their beauty consists of the pure natural overflowing of joy, as of a lark's song:

> "Fair and fair and twice as fair,
> As fair as any may be;
> Thy love is fair for thee alone
> And for no other lady."

But we do not hear of:

> "The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow.
> The devotion to something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow."

To use the expression of a modern psychologist, the Elizabethan is a literature of the once-born, and to adopt one of the most abominable of modern barbarisms, there is very little psychology in Elizabethan literature. It is only in the late and hectic beauty of Ford that the subtleties of character are the main theme of dramatic interest.

The Puritan movement tended to supply the very element that was lacking in Elizabethan literature, though it bought it dearly at the cost of its joy and spontaneity. The Puritan idea was first of all to put the soul right with God, by a purely internal process of faith. Good works would doubtless follow, but they were not to be sought as an end in themselves. The tendency to plunge deeper and deeper into the recesses of the soul had been marked all through the reigns of the first two Stuarts. In 1621 had appeared the "Anatomy of Melancholy," a voluminous and discursive, rather than profound, inquiry into emotional ailments. Biography was an art coming into vogue, and Walton's first two Lives were but a prelude to such masterly character-studies as those of Clarendon, Lucy Hutchinson, and Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle. Even amongst the Royalists the workings of the soul were a matter for observation and record; Laud's Diary, and still more, "Eikon Basilike," are spiritual autobiographies, and the King's book stirred the country to its heart. In poetry, too, a similar process was taking place. Quite apart from any Puritan leanings, a craving to satisfy the deeper spiritual needs found expression through a score of pens, and an English poet dared celebrate that greatest of all initiates, St. Theresa of Jesus.

But these were eddies and backwaters out of the main current of Puritanism. Crashaw himself cannot be counted among the initiates, his verse is too decorative and sentimental; he could see the goal, as the Pilgrims from the Delectable Mountains glimpsed the Celestial City.

It was only to be expected, however, that the strong passion for the divine union should bear its fruit in producing, on English soil, some kindred spirits with the Boehmes and Catharines, or even the Dantes and Theresas, of the Continent. Here we must insert one caution, very necessary nowadays. There is nothing in the word mysticism to offend the most scientific authority, nor is there any necessary connection between it and such controversial subjects as magic, alchemy, spiritualism and the so-called occult sciences. A mystic is simply a man who has studied and developed certain faculties latent in his own soul. He recognizes a purpose, which he feels to be divine, working throughout the universe, and he is conscious of a personality infinitely transcending his own. His object is to break the shell of his own little being, and to blend, in love and perfect union, with the object of his worship. The consummation to which he aspires is perfectly described in the concluding lines of the "Divine Comedy": "Already my desire and will were rolled, even as a wheel that moveth equally, by the love that moves the sun and the other stars."

There have been three periods when the mystical consciousness was conspicuously developed in this country. The first follows upon the springtide of national unity which produced the decorative architecture, and includes the names of Rolle and Hylton, coming to a close with Julian of Norwich. Of the third, which begins with William Law, and includes Blake and Shelley, we shall have something to say later. The second period is the one with which we are dealing, and it does not pass until some years after the Restoration. Here it stands in notable contrast with the Elizabethan age, which was essentially unmystical. When half a nation is straining after the divine union, it is only to be expected that one or two favoured spirits should attain closer to that goal than their fellows. "Come forth," says Baxter, "come

forth then, O my drooping soul, and lay aside thy winter mourning dress; let it be seen in thy believing joys and praise, that the day is now appearing and the spring is come."

George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, is now universally acknowledged to be among the master initiates, and the Society of Friends was an attempt to realize in practice the extreme idealism of the Reformation, and to break down the last barriers between the believer and God. A pedantry, which is too common among modern students, has tended to overlook the equal claims of John Bunyan, on account of the extreme simplicity of his exposition. But the "Grace Abounding" and "Pilgrim's Progress" contain a record of mystical experience not inferior to that of Fox's "Journals."

We have now arrived at a point from which we can survey the Puritan movement as a whole, and view it in relation to that which it superseded. The Tudor ideal had been one of discipline, national in so far as it centred in an English sovereign, and set its face against every form of external domination, but external in so far as it was maintained by the pressure of the foreigner from without, and of the central power from within. The causes of the English Reformation had been, in the main, political; the feeling at the back of the resistance to the Armada had been the determination that Britons should not be slaves to foreigners. The motive of the Tudor system was law—the social and religious hierarchy of Spenser and Hooker. By the time of the Stuarts, the system had become obsolete by its very success. What the drill-sergeant could accomplish had been done. As its function was superseded, the decay of the central power became ever more manifest.

Puritanism attempted to apply a new and more vital discipline in place of that of the Tudors. The law had done its work, and the way was now prepared for the

triumph of the spirit. England had escaped the yoke of Spain, it was now time for her to escape the bondage of Satan. For what purpose had the people broken from their Egyptian taskmasters, if they were to wander for ever in the wilderness without one sight of the Promised Land? Why had the Reformation been maintained against a world in arms, if we were never to reform, never to reap its fruits? It was a time of boundless hope. England should become a nation of saints, a peculiar people chosen by God to be a shining light to all nations and a terror to wrongdoers. As Robespierre was ready to sacrifice half France to attain the millennium of Rousseau, so the Puritans were ready to cast away Church and King and their very pleasures — everything that could stand in the way of a prospect so dazzling and so nigh at hand.

It has been necessary to take this survey of the Puritan movement in general, in order to understand both the intensity and the nature of the patriotism to which it gave birth. At first sight the attitude of the Parliamentary party is anything but patriotic. They had refused to support the King in maintaining the claims and armaments of their country, and they had even gone so far as to countenance the Scotch invasion. Yet much of this seeming factiousness was merely the desire to make England a nation of which they could be proud. Before they could put a sword into her hands, they must break her chains. But the consciousness of patriotism was, in the breast of the average English Puritan, a plant of gradual growth. It does not figure very largely in the voluminous controversial journalism of the time, nor in the records of Parliament. It was only when the enemies within the realm had been conquered that England could take stock of her situation as regarded her neighbours.

In the noblest breast of all, noblest even in despite of its cankering pride, the love of England was a

passion from the beginning. The news of troubles at home had reached John Milton when he was in Italy, preparing for a voyage to Greece. Instantly he decided that the post of duty lay at home, and for the next twenty years we find him in the forefront of the battle for liberty and religion, as he conceived of them. Already he had shown that he meant to break decisively with the prevailing literary tradition of his time. He had taken the masque, perhaps the most trivial of all Caroline poetic forms, and had made it, without detracting one whit from its beauty, into a very sermon. His "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity" had struck a deeper religious note than any contemporary verse, with the possible exception of the best of Herbert's. Milton was, in every respect, a different type of man from the great Elizabethans. If Shakespeare's genius had grown like a wild rose, Milton's was like some carefully tended garden flower. Every step of his career was checked and noted down with the most deliberate introspection. As early as his twenty-third birthday he had been worried at the barrenness of his literary output, and found refuge in a faith not untinged with anxiety.

His language and his whole conduct are those of a man who already recognizes his divine mission, and sets himself deliberately night and day to prepare himself for it. One of his Italian letters shows how intimately he conceived the destinies of nations to be bound up with their literature. "For what do words used without skill or meaning, which are at once corrupt and misapplied, denote, but a people listless, supine and ripe for servitude? On the contrary, we have never heard of any people or State which has not flourished in some degree of prosperity as long as their language has retained its elegance and its purity."

With this solemn idea of the trust committed to men of letters, the young Milton closed his apprenticeship, and entered the lists of thought. He had already foreshadowed

the line he was going to take, in that apostolic passage of "Lycidas," like a burst of thunder from an unclouded sky, more terrible from its suddenness. He had not been one of those dour, uncompromising Puritans, who grudged God's house its beauty, and even decency, in their enthusiasm. He loved the beauty of holiness as much as Laud, but he was shocked and scandalized by those who were responsible for its administration. The Tudor system, with its insistence upon the letter of the law, provided no satisfaction for a soul so spiritual as Milton's. The hierarchy of Church officials became Antichrist in his eyes, a clog upon the religious development of the nation. For God's sake and England's it must be done away with at all costs.

Milton was now entering upon the second and hardest period of his career. He had already established his right to a niche in the temple of English letters, only below that of Shakespeare himself. But now, for nearly a score of years, the spring of his verse ceased to flow, and only a few sonnets welled up from time to time to show that it was not dry. Visions of an English epic had already begun to float through his dreams, but, with the deliberation characteristic of him, he chose to take the field on foot, and to express himself in prose. All that was worst, and nearly all that was best in him were called into play. He fought with a merciless and savage determination, sparing neither himself nor others. He willingly sacrificed even his sight to the cause, as he had already sacrificed his muse. He had the faith which moves mountains, but towards an opponent, no whit of charity. Yet he would be a bold man who would venture to sneer at him. Such zeal is hardly realizable by our colder age. Everything was at stake; the war in heaven was not more colossal than that going on before Milton's eyes, and in which he was taking the part of the angels. England's supreme opportunity had

come; what use she would make of it the next few years would show.

The book or pamphlet with which Milton opens his attack is a statement of his principles. It contains a brief history of the English Reformation from its beginnings. Milton is nothing if not an iconoclast, and he is not afraid to attack even such fathers as Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer. His own principles are clearly stated at the outset. The divine intercourse between God and the soul had been drawn up into an exterior and bodily form; clean linen had taken the place of clean innocency; the worship of God had been stifled under a mass of ceremonies and gewgaws, until Christianity had been almost emptied of Christ's spirit. The Reformation had been a step towards liberty, but it had not gone far enough. It had been, in the main, the work of worldly men, pricked on by worldly motives. The Pope had gone, but not the bishops; Rome had lost her power, but Romish ceremonies still remained to stifle true religion. It was time now to remove these last hindrances, and to come forth into the light of God's day.

Three classes of men, says Milton, want to hinder this consummation—the antiquarians, the libertines, and the politicians. In dealing with the first of these, Milton displays all the uncompromising Radicalism that marked the Puritan spirit. He dismisses the appeal to the early fathers, with as little respect as he had treated the Protestant martyrs. For one thing, it was inaccurate, and even if it had been otherwise, who were the fathers but fallible, and often tedious and heretical men? Milton was no more to be baulked of his divine intercourse by the authority of a father than by that of a bishop. The spirit was all in all. As for the libertines, the men who supported the old system because it permitted them an easy life and allowed them to enjoy themselves on Sundays, Milton dismisses them with summary con-

tempt, being manifestly unable to believe that any good man could entertain their case for a moment.

Then he comes to the politicians, which gives him opportunity for stating his own political principles, and directly challenging the Tudor system. "This is the masterpiece of the modern politician, how to qualify and mould the sufferance and subjection of a people to the length of that foot which is to tread on their necks, . . . to make men governable in this manner, their precepts tend mainly to break a national spirit and courage"—in short the ideal of a strong, central power, and a hierarchy of degrees, is the goal of politics. "How to solder, how to stop a leak, how to keep up the floating carcase of a crazy or diseased monarchy or state, betwixt wind and water, swimming still upon her own dead lees, that is now the deep design of a politician." In short, the external discipline was no longer enough, the drill-sergeant had done his work, and the discipline of the heart was the thing now needful.

"To govern well," says Milton, "is to train up a nation in true wisdom and virtue, and that which springs from thence, magnanimity (take heed of that), and that which is our beginning, regeneration, and happiest end, likeness to God, which in one word we call Godliness." "Alas, sir," he says again, "a commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in virtue as in body." Here consists the basis of Milton's political philosophy. He would supersede the system of the Tudors by one consciously inspired with a loftier aim. How this aim was to be achieved was a matter on which his views were to develop in the course of time. At present he was a Presbyterian, by and by he was to become more independent than the Independents. To supersede one drill by another was, as he was to find, no advance at all.

We need not follow the pamphlet through the attack upon the bishops, that occupies most of its remaining pages. We need only refer to the concluding paragraphs, which form perhaps the most superb prose passage in the whole of our language, and show Milton's patriotism at its best. Suddenly, out of the midst of gloomy forebodings, he feels himself rapt by inspiration, and his prose swells into a sustained organ blast of prayer, which ends at last in a denunciation of almost unimaginable wrath. He is consumed with anxiety lest the forces he is opposing may prove, after all, too strong. "O let them not bring about their damned designs," he cries, "that stand now at the entrance of the bottomless pit, expecting the watchword to open and let out those dreadful locusts and scorpions, to reinvolve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness where we shall never more see the sun of Thy truth again, never hope for the cheerful dawn, never more hear the bird of morning sing. Be moved with pity at the afflicted state of this our shaken monarchy, that now lies labouring under her throes and struggling against the grudges of more dreaded calamities." Then the note changes. It is as if the God to whom Milton appealed had already inspired him with confidence, for the agonized cry passes into an assured and jubilant triumph. Summoning up all his forces, and rising to the height of his genius, Milton continues, "O Thou, that after the impetuous rage of five bloody inundations, and the succeeding sword of intestine war, soaking the land in her own gore, didst pity the sad and ceaseless revolution of our swift and thick-coming sorrows; when we were quite breathless, of Thy free grace didst motion peace, and terms of covenant with us; and first having wellnigh freed us from antichristian thraldom, didst build up this Britannic Empire to a glorious and enviable height, with all her daughter islands abour her; stay us in this felicity, let not the obstinacy of our half-obedience and

will-worship bring forth that viper of sedition that for these four score years hath been breeding to eat through the entrails of our peace; but let her cast her abortive spawn without the danger of this travailing and throbbing kingdom: that we may still remember in our solemn thanksgivings, how for us the northern ocean, even to frozen Thule, was scattered with the proud shipwrecks of the Spanish Armada, and the very maw of hell ransacked, and made to yield up her concealed destruction, ere she could vent it in that horrible and damned blast."

Milton has now soared above doubt, and solemnly exults over the approaching deliverance and final sanctification of his country. "Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains in new and lofty measure, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages; whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured by the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting from her the rags of her whole vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when thou, the eternal and shortly expected King, shalt appear in the clouds. . . ."

Here is a patriotism as intense as Shakespeare's, but differing from it fundamentally. Shakespeare had loved the land because of her beauty, the dear souls she contained, her strength, her majesty, her invincibility. He combined the love of Pericles for Athens with that of Virgil for Rome. But Milton's is the all-absorbing devotion which made the ancient Hebrew regard his people as the chosen of God. Patriotism was part of his religion, and woe to those who stood in its way! The spirit which inspired Samuel to hew Agag in pieces before the Lord, and Elijah to mock the prophets of Baal, is revealed upon almost every page of his polemical writings. But he was

too great of soul, and his education had been laid on too broad a basis, to cause him to sacrifice what was best in the elder ideal. He loved England the more for her Shakespeare and her Spenser; he had steeped himself in her legends and ancient literature.

Indeed, he had designed, as early as in the 'thirties, to be the English Homer. He would celebrate the legend of Trojan Brutus, or he would write an English Arthuriad. Such schemes were long to float through his mind, before they were abandoned for the cosmic achievement of his latter years. There was one fatal objection to either a Brut or an Arthuriad, for the new-found habit of introspection had brought in its train a notable development of the critical faculty. Milton could not accept the legends with the childlike trust of an earlier generation. He must needs sift them, and examine the authority. He could not fail to perceive that though there might possibly be some substratum of truth in them, the legends as they stood were not the truth. To a mind of such rare directness, this was to render them useless for epic purposes. For even in his loftiest fancies, Milton seldom fails to insert such provisos as that the astronomer "sees, or thinks he sees," landscapes in the moon, or to remind his readers of the fabulous nature of heathen mythology. Indeed, in "Paradise Regained," he denies himself even such guarded fancies as these. He therefore could not possibly have embarked, as Spenser might, upon a narrative whose basis he recognized to be fictitious.

But in these years, before his blindness, he did indeed make some progress with a history of his country. His zeal for truth is here as evident as his patriotism, for though his avowed aim is to do good, he sternly rejects the most promising material, if it fails to satisfy the rigid standard he exacted. Here the difference between his method and that of his predecessors is conspicuous. He neither attempted to indulge his genius for the picturesque,

nor to extol in glowing phrase the exploits of our ancestors. He wanted to find out what manner of men these ancient Englishmen were, and in what respects they had gone wrong, that we might know how to avoid their blunders. He admits that we have little enough cause for pride in the early inhabitants of this island, whom the Romans had beaten into something like civilization. But all his candour did not make Milton less proud of his country, or doubtful of her divine election. He brought a broader mind to the consideration of her prospects than any of his contemporaries. He was ready enough to admit her prowess in war, but he wanted to see this supplemented by a greater fitness to solve the problems of peace. Hence the constant stress that he lays both on education and freedom of thought. We see him falling away from the Presbyterian ideal, and the new divines become as odious to him as the bishops themselves. He is drifting away from Parliament to the army, for it is upon the army that the championship of the most advanced Puritanism devolves.

It was an army the like of which no nation had ever yet seen, nor is like to see. The bands of an inflexible discipline united it; riot, debauchery, swearing, all the usual accompaniments of camp life, were put down less by force than by the general abhorrence they excited; a common purpose rendered it invincible. And yet this army was a debating club, where the strangest opinions were mooted and the wildest fancies gravely received. The Presbyterians would fain have brought it under their yoke, but the fighters were stronger men than the politicians. The Clarke papers, which have recently been given to the world, show what a ferment prevailed among these earnest men, all trying to realize the same ideal in different ways. Not only in religion, but in politics, did they advance with the most bewildering rapidity. It was the army who insisted on

cutting off the King's head; they had shed their blood for the cause, and were in no mood for half-measures. Fifth monarchy men, followers of free-born John Lilburne, hard radicals like Ireton, ranters, anabaptists, all stood shoulder to shoulder on parade, and fought side by side in the field.

To cross-grained Prynne, such difference of opinion was the work of the Devil, a thing to be put down by any means. But to Milton, the reverse was the case. He desired to see the nation have her own way to work out her own salvation, and he had enough confidence in his fellow-Englishmen to believe them capable of going on without leading strings. At a time when so many men were determined to make all things new, he had an ideal of England regenerate, as much superior to that of the average Puritan as his intellect was above that of ordinary men. "Methinks," he said in a famous passage, "methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks, methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eye at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance."

"God," he tells us, "is beginning some new and great period of his Church, even to the reforming of reformation itself, and what should he do but reveal it, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen?" Milton has faith not only in the moral, but the intellectual capacity of his countrymen. He even rakes up a tradition that the Pythagorean philosophy and the Persian wisdom emanated from England. If it had not been for the bishops, the work of our Wycliffe would have rendered unnecessary that of Huss, Calvin and Luther, and their names would never have emerged out of obscurity. When Milton comes to expound his scheme of education, its

aim is to stir up in his pupils " high hopes of living to be brave men, and worthy patriots, dear to God and famous to all ages."

We have now come to the close of the first Civil War, when Puritan England, united, if only by force of the New Model, could resume her position in Europe without any fear of papist influences in her own counsels, and able to maintain her honour and armaments without the qualms inspired by Buckingham and ship-money. The very factiousness of the Royalists was driving the Puritans into the consciousness of patriotism. Gardiner tells us how it was the disclosures of the Naseby cabinet, which exposed the King's willingness to call in Irish and Lorrainers, that first changed the New Model into a national army.

In the hour of their adversity, the Royalists showed how completely personal ties prevailed against their patriotism. They joined themselves to every disruptive and foreign influence that could afford them the least help. After the King's execution they knew no scruples. Even men like Hyde and Ormonde soiled their hands with plots to murder the Protector. Rupert of the Palatine preyed with English ships upon English shipping. The young Charles had none of his father's grave righteousness of intention. He was more of a Frenchman than an Englishman, and was not so much of a stranger to virtue and patriotism as humorously scornful of both. He was in continual intrigue with the Courts of France, Spain and Holland. With even less shame than the Long Parliament, he was ready to place the foot of Scotland upon the neck of England, if only he could thus come by the crown. Very characteristic of his cynic humour was his remark, when in disguise and fleeing for his life, that Charles Stuart deserved hanging most of all, for calling the Scots into England. It was not often that he blundered into the truth.

Now that the Puritans had accomplished their immediate object of vanquishing the King, they were free to turn to other business. The history of their ascendancy may be roughly divided into three stages, the English period, in which the cavaliers are the enemy, then the British period, in which Scotland and Ireland are subdued, and finally the European period, or as some might prefer to call it, the Imperial. The Scottish nation during the Civil War was playing a part whose danger might have been apparent to a far-sighted statesman, such as Scotland did not possess. She had, with perfect impunity, controlled the destinies of England. Her army had invaded England, and been bought off practically at its own terms. Again, her intervention had turned the scale of the Civil War, and she had been able, as the price of her support, to impose her own Presbyterian dogma on her neighbour. From the leaders of the rebellion, she had heard nothing but praise. Milton himself had paid her a tribute in his Reformation pamphlet. Such unanimity of friendship might have excited suspicion. National antipathies that have lasted for centuries are not to be got over in a year or two, and the old prejudice had, if anything, been irritated by the humiliating position in which England had been placed. Even amongst the divines at Westminster, Calamy had expressed his indignation that Englishmen should not be able to work out their own liberties for themselves. Cromwell's dispatch from Marston Moor displayed a silence that might well have seemed ominous, as to the doings of his allies. The collapse of the Presbyterian experiment in England hurried on the day of reckoning. The smaller kingdom, fired by her recent successes and stung by betrayal, made another attempt to impose her will upon England, and the Scottish army intervened for a third time, to meet, not with a Charles or a Rupert, but a Cromwell. So that the first task of the army, after the King's execution, was

to subdue the whole of the United Kingdom, a thing never accomplished before.

Both the Scots and the Irish, as we may learn from Harrington's "Oceana," were regarded as inferior races, though the Irish were the more obnoxious of the two, owing to their papistry. Milton shed his Scottish sympathies with his Presbyterianism, and we soon find him railing at names like Colkitto, Macdonnel and Galasp, with a too obvious national prejudice. A few years later he is writing, with grim satisfaction, of "Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued." In an even more insulting strain Andrew Marvell writes:

> "The Pict no refuge now shall find
> Within his particoloured mind."

Scottish prisoners, especially after Dunbar, are treated with a barbarity little inferior to that extended to the Irish; and Monk, taking up Cromwell's work, completed the first real English conquest of Scotland. There was no chance for a Bruce against the New Model.

Now that English Puritanism was able to stand by itself, a heavy reckoning was in store for another Protestant nation. The United Provinces had been allowed to capture our trade, to violate our waters and massacre our merchants with impunity. When Puritanism was fighting for its existence, we could not afford to break with a Calvinist nation. Even Milton is able to gloss over the massacre of Amboina by arguing that it is not "to be considered to the breach of confederate nations whose mutual interest is of such high consequence though their merchants bicker in the East Indies." This was a point of view that obviously could not be maintained for long by a proud nation. The Dutch were soon to exchange the words of Charles for the deeds of the Commonwealth.

It must be remembered that the rebellion was chiefly a middle-class movement. It numbered, indeed, many a country gentleman, and even a sprinkling of peers, but

the majority of both these classes were of the cavalier faction. But the mercantile and trading classes were almost united in the Parliamentary cause. London was the stronghold of Puritanism, and if the Eastern Counties were foremost in achieving the final victory, it was the London trained bands who, at Turnham Green and Newbury, had saved their side from ruin. Now the Dutch were our great rivals in trade, and our own civil dissensions did not tend to make our position any better. The spectacle of another nation carrying off the prizes of the world's commerce, often by force, put a heavy strain upon Protestant sympathy. Besides, the King's execution had united all classes in Holland in a common pity and horror; even the preachers turned their eloquence against their fellow-Calvinists in England. Worse was to come, the English envoy was murdered in cold blood, and not one of the murderers could be brought to book. Things were obviously hastening to a crisis.

It seemed as if, at the last moment, hostility might after all be turned to friendship. The young Prince of Orange died suddenly of smallpox, and a revolution changed the Dutch Government into a burgher aristocracy. Surely now the two Governments, so similar in origin and spirit, might patch up some sort of alliance. Negotiations were actually entered into for the purpose, but it proved to be a case of diamond cut diamond Each side was determined to have the best of a bargain, and neither was simple enough to be tricked into acquiescence with the other's claims. Besides, the outrages on English honour continued, and the English ambassadors scarcely dared venture themselves in the streets. Then the Parliament took the decisive and masterly step of striking at the two mainstays of Dutch commerce, the carrying trade and the fisheries. The Navigation Act gave Holland the choice between fighting and being bled to death. The national spirit was thoroughly roused.

Memories of Amboina and Polarun were revived, and the demand went up for vengeance. Thus the first national act of a reformed and Protestant England was to engage in mortal combat with a Calvinist nation, her old ally against Spain.

This war, with its complication of business and ideal motives, properly belongs to the pre-Cromwellian period of the Commonwealth, though it was under Oliver's auspices that it was brought to a close. It proved that the shame of Rhé and Cadiz was not due to any degeneracy of the English spirit, but simply to the Government having failed to command the support of the nation. As it was, there was plenty of discontent and even smothered rebellion, but the great Puritan impulse was at its height, and the men of Marston and Naseby proved as formidable by sea as by land. The triumphs of this war were not so conspicuous, but the honour was little less than that of the Elizabethans. If the Dutch were a small nation, they were a more formidable foe than the Spanish, and both in this war and in that of Charles II the naval combats were of extraordinary obstinacy and duration. The very names of the Three Days' Battle and the Four Days' Battle showed how terrible was the trial of strength, when Englishman met Dutchman. Our hard-earned and partial victory in this first war is due, after the spirit of our men, to Vane the organizer, and Blake the soldier-admiral. It is, as regards the Commonwealth, almost a side issue. War with Holland was necessary and even inevitable, but to fight with the Protestants was no part of the national purpose. With the accession of Oliver to the Protectorate, our policy becomes definitely expressive of the Puritan ideal, and the history of England, to a large extent, that of Europe.

It is one of the strangest and saddest lights upon human nature, that the honesty and innate goodness of Oliver Cromwell can ever have been for a moment in

doubt, that any man, who has read not some one else's account of him, but the very words that came burning from his heart, can have spoken or written about him without enthusiasm. His character is so divinely simple; he was the most childlike of heroes. He did not study a part nor prepare his speeches, he could not even remember what he had said, he came down and poured out his soul to his hearers, as if they were as good and as noble as himself. There are some things of which it is impossible to give formal exposition. To a man born blind one cannot explain the glory of a sunset; and the taste of an owl, who finds God's light and man's too bright for his big staring eyes, is incapable of refutation. Oliver's words are things we can palpably feel, and some there are at which it is hard to refrain from actual tears. One historian, perhaps the greatest of his century, did see and depict him as he was; Dryasdust has ever since been trying to whittle down that estimate.

"May God be judge between you and me!" were the last words of the Protector, spoken in Parliament, and in God's hands we may well leave his fame, as far as he is concerned; but it will be an evil day when cold-hearted specialists are allowed to work their will upon the memory of our heroes. We will first do for Cromwell what we did in part for Laud, and quote his dying prayer. If some detractor maintains that the Archbishop's last words were prepared deliberately for their theatrical effect, heartless and uncharitable as the supposition may be, it is one that could not by the wildest stretch of imagination apply to Cromwell. For these words are the notes, taken down by faithful friends, of the mutterings of a dying man. They give the key alike to Oliver's career and to his patriotism, and they are as follows:

"Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in covenant with Thee through grace, and I may, I will come to Thee for Thy people. Thou hast

made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death; Lord, however Thou do dispose of me, continue and go on and do good for them. Give them constancy of judgment, one heart, a mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation; and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much upon Thy instruments to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer:—even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night, if it be Thy pleasure. Amen."

Of these words one can only say, that if they were uttered by an insincere or crafty man, then there is no truth and sincerity in the world, nor ever has been. The touch of realism at the end, and the prophetic forgiveness, with which he overwhelms the enemies who were to insult his remains, are too solemn for comment. And yet this is not an isolated or eccentric pronouncement of a private man, but the voice of Puritanism itself speaking through the mouth of her greatest representative. The ideal, though clothed in rugged prose, is that which we have already heard from John Milton, during the first triumph of the Long Parliament. There is the conception of England as the chosen people, whose mission it is to accomplish the Reformation, and to make the name of Christ glorious through the world. Since Milton's first pamphlet, many an illusion had been cruelly dispelled, and the goal was as far from realization as ever, but there is the same confidence of ultimate success, on the very eve of the Restoration. "Truly," murmured poor Oliver, "God is good; indeed He is; He will not . . ." and his voice died away.

This measureless faith in the divine goodness is the

more wonderful when we reflect that ever since he had turned the Rump out of doors, and applied himself to his task with a despot's power, his life had been a series of disappointments. He had been unable to get the people to work with him. Pettiness, intrigue, pedantry, marred and befogged the work of Reformation, and the might of the New Model was the only sure stay Oliver had to lean upon. " I can say in the presence of God," had been the cry of his last speech, " in comparison with Whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth—I would have been glad to have lived under my woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep—rather than undertake such a government as this. But, undertaking it by the Advice and Petition of you I did look that you who had offered it unto me should make it good." In vain !

It had been but five years past that he had come down to open the first of his Parliaments, in an address that glowed with confidence and thanksgiving. He had never looked to see such a day as this, he told them, when Jesus Christ should be so owned as He was that day, and in their work. He had quoted the beautiful words of Isaiah, how God should plant in the wilderness the cedar and shittah tree, the myrtle and the olive tree, and how He would set in the desert the fir tree, the pine tree and the box tree together. " I confess," he repeats, " I had never looked to see such a day ; I did not.—Perhaps you are not known by face to one another ; indeed I am confident you are strangers, coming from all parts of the nation as you do : but we shall tell you indeed we have not allowed ourselves the choice of one person in whom we had not this good hope, that there was in him faith in Jesus Christ and love to all His people and saints."

He who was animated with this extraordinary idealism was no narrow fanatic, but a man of a justice and tolerance at least as magnanimous as that of Milton himself. Here not only his keen sense of justice, but his patriotism

came to the rescue. In a passage almost miraculous when we consider that the author was a fighting man, and a Puritan addressing Puritans, he confesses that there are times when he had rather been unjust to a Believer than to an Unbeliever. " Oh, if God fill your hearts with such a spirit as Moses had, and as Paul had—which was not a spirit for believers only, but for the whole people ! Moses he could die for them ; wish himself blotted out of God's book : Paul could wish himself accursed for his countrymen forever."

Truly, though Oliver would not accept a crown, his heart yearned towards his Englishmen with a fatherly affection to which Charles Stuart had been a stranger. He desired, from the depth of his soul, to find some arrangement under which honest men of every opinion could live and work harmoniously together for the common cause. " Therefore I beseech you—but I think I need not—have a care of the whole flock ! Love the sheep, love the lambs ; love all, tender all, cherish and countenance all, in all things that are good. And if the poorest Christian, the most mistaken Christian, shall desire to live peaceably and quietly under you—I say if any shall desire but to lead a life of godliness and honesty, let him be protected."

It is idle to ask whether patriotism or religion was uppermost in his mind. He could see no difference between them. England was the chosen land of God, which was to spread the reformed religion throughout the world. " I will make the name of Englishman as dreaded as that of Roman," was the traditional boast of the Protector. It is a note that runs all through his speeches. It rises to a height in his fifth speech, in which he justifies the war with Spain. If Englishmen were the elect people in Oliver's eyes, the Spanish were the Canaanites, Philistines, friends of the Devil and the Pope. Memories of Gondomar and Cadiz rankled worse than those of

Amboina, and demanded an even heavier reckoning. "The Papists in England," says Oliver, speaking for all Puritans, "they have been accounted ever since I was born Spaniolized," and again, "All honest interests, yea, all the interests of the Protestants, are the same as yours." "Why, truly, your great enemy is the Spaniard. He is naturally so; he is naturally so throughout—by reason of that enmity that is in him against whatever is of God."

No Englishman worthy the name can read, without a thrill, the words that follow, culled from one of his last speeches. "I am persuaded that you are all, I apprehend that you are all, honest and worthy good men; and that there is not a man of you would not desire to be found a good patriot. I know you would! But we are apt to boast sometimes that we are Englishmen; and truly it is no shame for us that we are Englishmen; but it is a motive for us to do like Englishmen, and to seek the real good of this nation and the interest of it." Can any one still harbour doubts as to the sincerity of this man?

A certain type of detractor would fain bring Oliver to earth, by proving that such men are wont to pursue their objects by severely practical means. The hero must not soil his white hands, he must never condescend to the laws of nature and man, or such drudge work as the adjustment of means to ends. Oliver certainly was never such a hero as this, he had to fight through a tangle such as never confronted any hero of fiction. It does not need all the resources of modern research to show that often he did not see his way clear, that sometimes, in sheer despair of untying the knot, he snatched his sword and cut it. A man who has all the threads of government in his hands, must necessarily take into account a thousand troublesome and disconnected things, which the ordinary man, at his distance, cannot perceive. Above all, he had to keep the Government going. He had no sympathy with

the will of the people, if that will tended to evil; he was first of all a Puritan. He knew, or felt he knew, what part England ought to play among the nations, and the destinies of England were in his hands. Thus he had no hesitation in governing the country by his major-generals, or turning away members from the doors of Parliament.

It is a charge brought against Drake and his peers, that their object in harrying the Spanish Main was to get loot, and the same sort of talk is indulged in about Oliver's motives in making war with Spain. In an age when the foreign policy of other nations equalled in unscrupulousness, and exceeded in cynicism, that of our own day, when trade interests were an integral factor of policy, and when one nation insolently claimed to exercise sovereign rights over the New World, who shall blame the patriot statesman because he took into account the temporal, as well as the spiritual, interests of the nation whose leader and servant he was? Besides, his policy gave rise to bitter and economically sound complaints, that the interests of trade were being neglected, and that our real foe was Holland. For, if Spain offered rich spoils, she was also one of our best customers, and the stoppage of the Spanish trade did much to foment the unpopularity which swept away the Cromwellian system after its founder's death.

Spain was, to Oliver, the quintessence of all things evil; war with her was a natural and necessary part of his policy, and the Dutch War was not so. Indeed, at the end of that war he had received with cordiality the Dutch ambassadors, and even renewed his suggestions for an alliance. His policy was throughout Protestant. His arms were directed against Spain, his diplomacy against Austria. He intervened on behalf of the Huguenots of France and the Protestants of Savoy. In this latter case, of the poor Vaudois, we know, from Milton's sonnet, how intense and pure was the sympathy excited in this

country, and the nation and its Protector never appeared in a nobler light than in the championship of these remote mountaineers, who could do nothing to repay us, and whose interests in no way affected our own. There is little truth, in such cases, in talking of patriotism being set aside for religion, as if it were better for a nation to be a miser and a bully with an eye to nothing but the main chance, than that she should stand for some noble cause, and defend it, even at the risk of life and pocket. Bound up with the same policy were Oliver's efforts to preserve unity among the Protestant nations of Northern Europe.

He has been blamed for taking the side of rising France against declining Spain. But this is to judge an unfinished work as if it were completed. His policy was cut short by his death, and it was Charles II who suffered Louis XIV to become the terror of Europe. Besides, France was, in her dealings with other nations, a champion of the Protestant cause. Not only was it Turenne who had turned the scale in the Thirty Years' War, but France had been, though in a sense more apparent than real, the champion of the Vaudois.

Above all, Oliver had made England, for the first time since the days of Elizabeth, a great international power. Turenne watched, with a soldier's admiration, Lockhart's red pikemen sweep the flower of the Spanish infantry out of almost impregnable redoubt, and even the English princes, who were fighting on the Spanish side, felt a pride in their countrymen. The war with Spain was conducted, despite the ill-fated attempt on San Domingo, with a clean-cut efficiency which had been beyond the reach of Elizabeth's statesmen, though certainly the Spain of Philip IV was not that of Philip II. Besides the fact that we gained one of the most valuable of the West Indies, we crippled our enemy by cutting him off from his supply of treasure, and made use of our

command of the sea by a rigid blockade, which did not except even neutrals from its operation. It is one of the most striking triumphs of sea power that without landing a man, we paralysed and well-nigh dispersed the Spanish army which bade fair to have conquered Portugal. Not without reason did Dryden write of the Protector:

> "He made us freemen of the Continent
> Whom nature did like captives treat before."

Sprat spoke of him as having roused the British Lion from his slumbers, Dryden as having taught him to roar.

From the Puritan statesman we return to the thinker and poet whose career was so nearly complementary to his own. We need not follow each step of Milton's career, for the principles which we have already examined continued substantially unaltered to the day of his death. He devoted himself to the cause with a fearful and almost superhuman energy, dwelling with equal complacency on the loss of his own eyesight, and on the rumour that he had driven Salmasius into the grave by his invective. With true imaginative insight, he fixed on the King's book as the most dangerous asset of the Royalist cause, and essayed, in a treatise which it is painful to read, to kill every spark of pity for the royal victim. His effort baffled its own success by its very thoroughness, for it was calculated to shock the susceptibilities, and kindle the resentment of those who were not already converted. For this reason, though Milton's prose at its best rises to heights scarcely attained elsewhere, he cannot be called a good pamphleteer. Violence such as that of his two defences of the English people, which knocks down an opponent and rends him as he lies, violence which gesticulates and foams at the mouth, may be admirable as a *tour de force*, it may cause intense pain in those against whom it is directed, but it does not win men to its side. The spiritual pride, the lack of charity, which is Milton's besetting sin, went far to nullify the results of his

labours for God and his country during these twenty years of strife.

Through all these years the word which is most frequent and most sacred in his writings is Liberty. He consoles himself for his blindness by the consciousness that his eyes have failed,

> " overplied
> In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
> Whereof all Europe rings from side to side."

In another place he speaks of himself as vindicating the rights of the English nation, and consequently, those of Liberty.

In a passage which reveals at once the beauty and the breadth of his patriotism, he identifies his cause with that of the free in every nation. " Here I behold the stout and manly prowess of the German disdaining servitude; there the generous and lively impetuosity of the French; on this side the calm and stately valour of the Spaniard; on that, the composed and wary magnanimity of the Italian. Of all lovers of liberty and virtue, the magnanimous and the wise, in whatever quarter they may be found, some secretly favour, others openly approve. . . . Surrounded by congregated multitudes, I now imagine that from the columns of Hercules to the Indian Ocean, I behold the nations of the earth recovering that liberty which they so long had lost; and the people of this island are transporting to other countries a plant of more beneficial qualities, a more noble growth, than that which Triptolemus is reported to have carried from region to region; that they are disseminating the blessings of freedom and civilization among citizens, kingdoms and nations." Though Milton and Cromwell were aiming at substantially the same objects, the first idea before the poet's mind was figured as liberty, that before the Protector's was to forward the work of Reformation.

But liberty to Milton meant something different from

the ideal of the modern democrat. In his last effort to avert the ruin of all his hopes and the restoration of monarchy, he displays a nervous distrust of the multitude, and his Free Commonwealth is under the control of a close and permanent oligarchy. Venice and not Athens is his model. He has no sympathy with what is in fact the wholly illogical assumption, that democracy and liberty have necessarily any connection, or that the tyranny of a majority is likely to be milder than that of a despot. He writes in one of his sonnets, with deep political insight:

> "They bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
> And still revolt when truth would set them free.
> Licence they mean when they cry 'Liberty';
> For who loves that, must first be wise and good."

On the whole, he thinks his oligarchy is likely to be wiser and better than an uneducated multitude, swept along by every gust of passion, and that his Free Commonwealth is the fittest to maintain freedom, liberty of conscience, and the chance for every man to rise in the State according to his merits. Cassandra did not plead more earnestly, nor to a deafer audience, than he who had foregone the light of day in a ruined cause.

It was to England as a Protestant republic that Milton's devotion had been given, and he could not serve the ends of an England given up to the Devil. His letter to General Monk is a desperate appeal, that the good work be not abandoned at the last hour. He might as well have pleaded with a stone. Moloch in the form of Rupert, Belial in that of the King himself, came back to lord it over England. All was over; every sacrifice, even that of light itself, seemed to have been squandered in vain. The glad morning hopes were scattered for ever; the solemn thanksgivings and hallelujahs of saints were drowned in songs of mirth and ribaldry, the triumph of fiends. All thoughts of an Arthuriad were banished, and

the blind poet turned in his agony to an epic of the universe. Throughout "Paradise Lost" there is little, except the language, to tell us that Milton was an Englishman at all, or that such a thing as patriotism existed. He had fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and perhaps he felt less desolate on the burning marl of hell than in the green fields of England.

In "Paradise Regained," however, when the first bitterness has, as we may surmise, grown dull, something of the old spirit reappears, for our Saviour is depicted as a patriot, Who could proudly maintain His country's claim to stand for an intellectual and artistic eminence higher than that of Greece. In "Samson Agonistes," the sunset of Milton's genius, there can be no doubt that to some extent, at any rate, he had himself in mind in depicting the hero's character. How otherwise can we explain that almost unendurable cry:

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!"

But it may be affirmed with equal certainty, that he could not have had himself in mind all the time. It is inconceivable that the reproaches with which Samson overwhelms himself could have been applied by Milton to his own conduct. A different interpretation suggests itself, and it may not, perhaps, be too fanciful to surmise that Milton was recurring to his image of a strong man arousing himself out of sleep. Samson was the English nation, or rather the elect remnant of it, the chosen of God, who had beaten down their enemies through His grace at Naseby, at Dunbar, at Santa Cruz, but who had allowed themselves to be betrayed into casting away their strength, and who were being vexed in their captivity more and more every day. Was he cheered, on the brink of the grave, by a vision of the day when the saints of God, purified seven times in the fire, should cast off their chains and resume their power, and involve the whole

realm, priest and Cavalier and Puritan alike, in one common ruin? Certain it is that to Milton, Charles II and his Government were not fellow-countrymen, but Philistines, wicked men whom God had devoted to everlasting torments—no conception of patriotism could include them. Of Milton's final attitude we may judge from the lines:

> "Happen what may, from me expect to hear
> Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
> Our God, our Law, our nation, or myself."

Milton's point of view has much in common with that of another patriot, the republican, Algernon Sidney. His book on Government is a plea for liberty. Patriotism and the prosperity of nations are bound up with it. The glory of Rome was in direct proportion to the amount of liberty she enjoyed, her decline dates from the time of the usurper Augustus Cæsar. Freedom is a gift of God and nature, and the revolt of a whole nation cannot be called rebellion. The best government is that which provides for the good, not of the governors, but of the people, in order that "the people, being pleased with their present position, may be filled with love for their country, and encouraged boldly to fight for the public cause, which is their own." Sidney, in fact, takes a militant view of the state, and declares that the best Government is the one best prepared for war.

This brings us to a characteristic which colours the doctrines of even the most fervent Puritans, with the exception of the Quakers. This is the admiration for strength, for the strong man. This instinct, which has been hailed as an original discovery, and nicknamed natural selection, is, in fact, as old as thought. Sidney's argument about the Romans was that of Dante's "De Monarchia," as it was to be that of Nietzsche. In the seventeenth century it had a wide vogue. The belief in a strong central power had by no means perished with the

Tudor system, nor was it inconsistent with the idea of a more spiritual discipline, and a community of the elect. It is by an easy transition that we arrive at the idea that might carries its own justification. "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands," was the cry of Oliver, and the very fact that the Lord had done so was the best proof that He was fighting on the Puritan side.

Such a doctrine, though based upon a Pantheist philosophy, is that of Benedict Spinoza's "Tractatus theologico-politicus," and in most of the English writers of the time we find it developed to a greater or less degree. It is almost a necessary product of civil war. In Cromwell, the strong man of the age, this sheer masculine will-power is accountable for much that puzzles the formal or anæmic student. "There will be nine in ten against you," was told him of one of his schemes. "Very well," he said, "but what if I should disarm the nine and put a sword into the tenth man's hand?"

Milton had, if possible, even less regard for abstract constitutional rights. His argument for a permanent council of states was one of might. He eulogized Oliver alike in prose and verse, and he looked to him as his country's saviour. Equally significant is his treatment of Satan in "Paradise Lost." Milton, the moralist, sets out to justify God's ways to man; Milton, the artist, nearly succeeds in justifying Satan's ways to God.

In Harrington, the republican Utopist, the same tendency is pronounced. He proposes to describe what England might become, if she were reformed on ideal lines by Oliver himself. All through the book he is appealing to Machiavelli, whose doctrines he seems to regard as the quintessence of political wisdom. He takes no pains to hide his scorn for the Scots and Irish, whom he treats as inferior races; for England he forecasts a glorious future, not only in the domestic, but in the international sphere. He sees, what most of his con-

temporaries did not, that if a republic is to be maintained, it must be by putting society on a broad basis. The landed system of big estates was the main strength of the reaction, and Harrington proposes to go to the root of the matter by severely limiting the amount of land that any one man is allowed to hold. The Scots, he remarks, can never rise above unreasoning serfdom so long as the land is held by a few great chiefs. He further seeks to foster the republican spirit by providing for a rotation of officers.

Having fashioned his instrument, he lets us know what he proposes to do with it. Sea power is a first essential. "The sea giveth law to the growth of Venice, but the growth of Oceana (Utopian England) giveth law unto the sea." For the manhood of the nation he has provided by his agrarian law: "Agriculture is the bread of the nation; it is a mighty nursery of strength, the best armoury, the most assured knapsack." The book closes upon a speech in which the public orator of Oceana proposes to the "dear lords and excellent patriots" of the senate a comprehensive scheme of universal empire, such as may sometimes have haunted the dreams of the Protector. Great empires are propagated by conquest, by equal leagues, and by giving a certain measure of freedom to the conquered; the first plan is tyrannous, the second unsound, but the third, that of "Imperium et libertas," is both feasible and imperative for his ideal England. Here we have, in germ, the whole idea of modern imperialism.

To ask whether such a scheme be lawful, is to ask whether it be lawful for the country to "do her duty, and to put the world in a better condition than before." As to its expediency, Harrington considers that France, Italy and Spain are "all sick, all corrupted together," but that the first of them to recover, which will probably be France, will be able to subdue the rest and reduce

England to a province. Harrington, at least, had a shrewd anticipation of the power of "le Roi Soleil." Once we have conquered these states and given them a due measure of freedom, it will be easy enough to hold them; our experience in Scotland has shown how a few troops could effectively occupy a whole country, when forty thousand men were ready to march to their aid at any moment. Let us spread liberty and righteousness over the world, only first let us make sure of the supremacy of English arms and the English Empire.

Finally, Harrington applies to his country the passionate imagery of the ancient Hebrew. She is as the rose of Sharon, as the lily of the valley: "Arise, I say, come forth and do not tarry; ah, wherefore should mine eyes behold thee by the rivers of Babylon, hanging thine harps upon the willows, thou fairest among women!"

Andrew Marvell voices the same desire for a strong man, who shall lead England to universal empire. This he does in his Horatian Ode to Cromwell, one of the few memorable poems of State in our language. He was a republican, but his antecedents were Royalists, and how far he was from being a bigot is shown by the sublime tribute he pays to the fallen King. But Charles had been vanquished by a mightier than he, and it became him to submit to the inevitable with a good grace:

"Though justice against Fate complain,
And plead the ancient rights in vain,
But these do hold or break
As men are strong or weak.
Nature that hateth emptiness
Allows of penetration less,
And therefore must make room
When greater spirits come."

Soon Oliver will spread yet further the arms with which he has vanquished the Scots and Irish, over whom Marvell, like the others, scornfully exults:

As Cæsar he, erelong to Gaul,
o Italy an Hannibal,
And to all states not free
Shall climacteric be."

His poem on Oliver's death makes us feel the majesty which still brooded over the departed hero, that powerless form, lately the terror of Europe. His soldiers, at any rate, will not fail to remember him in their songs :

" Thee, many ages hence, in martial verse,
Shall th' English soldier, e'er he charge, rehearse,
And with the name of Cromwell armies fright."

Marvell's poem on Blake's victory at Santa Cruz breathes a strain truly Elizabethan :

" Peace, against you, was the sole strength of Spain,"

he says to England. Marvell remains a patriot to the end, and attacks the Government of the Restoration, not so much because he is a republican, as because he sees it wasteful and inefficient. One of the main counts of his indictment against Catholicism in high places is the impunity with which the French are allowed to plunder our shipping.

Another writer who was inspired to write of Oliver's death was Edmund Waller, who says :

" We must resign, Heaven his great soul doth claim,
In storms as loud as his immortal fame."

Waller is not an estimable character; his politics were those of the Vicar of Bray, but it is unjust to maintain, as Gardiner does, that there was no high inspiration in his art, in face of such passages as :

" The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made."

In his State poems Waller is especially the singer of the navy; one of his first efforts is a eulogy of Charles I's fleet, in face of which, he says, Frenchman and Spaniard merge their differences in a common fear. Under the

republic, he celebrates the defeat of Spain; during the Restoration, that of the Dutch.

A curious difference may be noticed between these two last poems, one which tends to show that, apart from the religious bond, the Englishman has a greater natural sympathy with the chivalrous Spaniard than with the phlegmatic Dutchman. Waller pauses in his account of Blake's victory to record the heroic end of the Marquis Admiral and his lady, and the pity it excited in brave English minds, but in the valour of the Dutchman he can see nothing better than Dutch courage:

> "Brandy and wine, their wonted friends, at length
> Render them useless and betray their strength."

The very triumphs of Puritanism were hurrying it to ruin. Every day the Protector's position was becoming more anomalous, more insecure. He longed, as well as Milton, to preside over a free England, but it was becoming more and more likely that the first use she would make of her freedom would be to sweep away his government. A country's nerves cannot be kept permanently at a state of extreme tension, and the excesses of the Puritans, and the gloomy moral tyranny they imposed, had begun to make men long passionately for rest. Besides, the King's execution, perpetrated in defiance of nine-tenths of the nation, had aroused a horror not easy to conceive of nowadays. King Charles became mightier after his death than he ever had been during his life. His coldness and lack of human sympathy had been a barrier between him and his subjects, now this was swept away for ever. His conduct before his judges and on the scaffold, so pathetic and yet so kindly, had atoned for the aloofness of his life. Men liked to recall little incidents like that of the tree he passed on his last walk, and of which he quietly remarked that it had been planted by his brother Henry. At last they saw not a monarch of snow, but a man with feelings like their own, cruelly persecuted for no sin, torn

from his children, and at last foully murdered. And this man was the Lord's anointed! No wonder that to old Cavaliers and to the rapidly increasing multitude who were acquiring Cavalier sympathies, the men who had done this thing were traitors, with whom no terms could be kept. It was openly proclaimed that killing was no murder. Oliver's life was not safe for a moment.

Puritanism was going to pieces of its own accord. Its most advanced exponents had launched out into wild theories, that went far beyond those of Oliver, theories untempered by his own sturdy sense of fact. With the exception of Milton, the ablest heads of the movement were being driven one by one into opposition. Not the least of Oliver's troubles was the series of interviews he had with men whom he would fain have had by his side, in his work for England. Fox called on him to lay his crown at the feet of Jesus; stern Ludlow demanded that the nation should have what it had fought for and be governed by its own consent; the virtuous Hutcheson, in response to a pathetic appeal, said that he could not be a party to the enslavement of his country. Oliver's Parliaments would not give him a fair chance to carry on the government. The Presbyterians, baulked of their own attempt to persecute, were for the most part sullen or hostile. "If this be the end of your sitting," he thundered, to his last Parliament, in one final burst of indignation, "and if this be your carriage, I think it is high time that an end be put to your sitting. And I do dissolve this Parliament! And let God be judge between you and me!"

Oliver had no choice. "I have sought the Lord night and day that He would rather slay me than put one upon the doing of this work," had been his cry of agony when he dismissed the Rump. Force, ever more naked and more resented, was all that lay between his cause and ruin. He was holding down the country by his major-

generals, who "behaved like bashaws." Such a policy of "Thorough" as Strafford had scarcely dreamed of, was now in active operation, and the people of England, in the midst of dazzling triumphs abroad, were being held down as sternly as those of Scotland. The iron had entered into their souls, and engendered a terror of military rule, which hampered our forces for over a century. Taxation was crushing, and our trade, so prosperous under Charles I, was badly hit by the Spanish War. Only such a man as Oliver Cromwell could have maintained the Protectorate at all, and under "Tumble-down Dick" everything fell to pieces like a card house. The last state of the realm seemed worse than the first; the supreme effort had been made, and had failed.

So at least might the situation have appeared to one who, like Milton, had his dearest hopes dashed successively to pieces—and saw the thing that he greatly feared come upon England. But even he could not see to the close. The experiment of a Commonwealth had been tried and failed, but the Puritan ideal had done its work. The nation had passed through the ordeal by fire, the inner and spiritual discipline, which was lacking to the Tudor system. The direct and garnered fruits of Puritanism were valuable enough. For the first time since the Hundred Years' War, England had produced an army equal, if not superior, to any Continental force. She had shown her capacity for carrying on a naval war on the grand scale, not by privately subscribed and more or less haphazard adventures, but with unwavering purpose and determination to win. We had gained Jamaica, and it was the Puritan emigrants who supplied the backbone to what might have been our American Empire. We had dealt a blow at our principal trade rival, which had gone far to start her upon her decline. We had risen from insignificance and isolation to the first rank of European powers. In the sphere of literature it is enough to mention

the name of Milton. Perhaps "Paradise Lost" was worth a revolution.

But the work of Puritanism did not end with its direct effects. Much of the bloom and graciousness of Tudor England had been lost, but that plant was already sick to death. In some respects the Cavalier reaction was more apparent than real. For all the talk of licentiousness, even such a simple step as to restore the old Sunday was not taken, and the Sabbatarian heresy was received into the bosom of the Church. The Cavalier Parliament built upon Roundhead foundations, and the work accomplished by the Long Parliament, during its first few stormy months, was never undone. In literature, too, the work accomplished was permanent. The new interest in biography, in the soul, was destined to develop finally, through Defoe and Richardson, into the art of fiction. To Puritan antecedents, though not to Milton, is to be traced the reform in prose, by which it becomes an instrument not for expressing gorgeous conceits, but capable of adjusting itself with subtle ease to the conveyance of any idea. In verse Milton, with a mighty hand, had arrested the decay of metre, which had been going on during the first half of the century. The new tyranny of the rhymed couplet, of which Waller and afterwards Dryden were the originators, did indeed produce results worse than the old license, but this was rather because the sources of inspiration were running dry, than because a movement was made in the direction of simplicity and sincerity.

But the most important change of all had been accomplished in the character of the nation. The Restoration license was only froth upon the surface; the old buoyant indiscipline was a thing of the past. The English temperament had taken on a gravity, an aptness for command and patience of subordination, which were necessary for the power which was to break Louis XIV

and Napoleon, and to govern a quarter of the human race. The spirit which sent the pikemen over the trenches at the Dunes, and created a Mr. Greatheart and a Mr. Valiant-for-Truth, has often burnt dim, but will never, we trust, be quite extinguished.

# BOOK II

## THE OLIGARCHY

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## CHAPTER I

### THE RESTORATION

TO any one who had watched the proud fabric of Cromwellian government tottering to its fall, it must have seemed as if all the work of Naseby and Worcester had been undone without a battle. The Cavalier armies had been smashed to pieces, had ceased to exist, and yet the cause had triumphed more surely than if Rupert had swept aside the trained bands of Turnham Green, and brought his master in triumph to Whitehall. For then the best that could have happened to the King would have been to have held down an unwilling people by force of arms; nay, the best men on his own side were but half-hearted in his cause. But now, not only did the King enjoy his own again, but he enjoyed it amid the loyalty of a whole nation. From Berwick to the Lizard, from the North Sea to the Irish Channel, men vied with each other in devotion to the restored monarchy. Parliament was packed with Tantivies, eager for revenge; the bishops were set up again; the men who had killed a king were themselves ripped up and quartered, and there were few to pity them. The New Model was disbanded.

However necessary the Puritan discipline had been, it met with scant gratitude from the nation. All the glories of the Protectorate could not atone for the loss of Merrie England, for the tyranny and strain and bankruptcy of those twenty years. Englishmen were weary to death of Ironside generals and Puritan preachers, and were ready

to acclaim, in a tumult of joy, the coming of a libertine, a foreigner, and a knave. Their relief was expressed by Cowley, in a vision of "the late man who made himself to be called Protector." The poet is transported to a hill in Ireland, commanding a prospect of the three kingdoms, and he bursts out into a lament expressive of that horror of civil war, which had now been burnt into the minds of Englishmen. He cries:

> "Unhappy Isle, no ship of thine at sea
> Was ever tossed and torn like thee."

England is a chaos, a confusion, a Babel, a Bedlam—how can she ever mock at French fickleness? She deserves to be overwhelmed, since she has taken not the heavens, but the winds for her guide, but even now God may save her from destruction for the sake of her royal martyr's prayers.

Then, out of the sea, arises a hideous figure, the incarnation of lawless strength and civil war, the spirit who has for twenty years managed the affairs of the country. This monster, or superman, expounds his gospel in a defence of Oliver, to which Cowley replies by enlarging upon the wickedness of one

> "Who thinks it brave
> Or great his country to enslave."

He goes on to attack the Protector's Cæsarism, not only on the score of its immorality, but of its want of success. The war with Spain was a ruinous folly, brought on by the fiasco of St. Domingo, and the nation had been reduced thereby to the verge of bankruptcy. We must admit that his diagnosis was correct, the cult of strength was as much part of the Cromwellian as it was to be of the Carlylese creed, for by a strange paradox the Puritans at once tended to enslave and to deify the Human Will.

Dryden's "Astræa Redux" breathes the same spirit as Cowley's essay, and gives the reverse of Clarendon's picture of England before the Civil War. Then the whole

of Europe had been at war while England had enjoyed peace; now, as Dryden put it, though without strict accuracy, all Europe was at peace, while England alone was torn by war. Charles had returned, and with him would come the reign of Saturn and peace. And Clarendon himself, he who was to shape the early fortunes of the new regime, tells us how God in one month has bound up the wounds caused by twenty years of horrible rebellion, carried on by the most wicked men in the world, " almost to the desolation of two Kingdoms, and the extreme defacing and deforming of the third." So far from foreboding any decline in national prestige, Clarendon boldly asserts that those two great foreign statesmen, Mazarin and Don Louis de Haro, died " within three or four months with the wonder, if not the agony, of this undreamed-of prosperity."

It might now have seemed as if the Stuart ideal was on the eve of a final victory. So strong was the Tory feeling in the country, so fervent the determination to avoid at all costs any repetition of the Rebellion, that the King's position was, for the time at any rate, impregnable. Had Charles II been such a king as Henry VIII, a strong and energetic Englishman, it is more than probable that he might have carried out " Thorough " after all, for even as it was, after all his errors and crimes, he managed at the end of his reign to govern without a Parliament, and amid the loyalty of his people. Devotion to the sovereign's person had never reached such a height, even in the days of Elizabeth. It had inspired all that was best, all that was most endearing, on the Cavalier side. The tradition is as permanent as that of Guy Fawkes. How many artists, journalists, young ladies, have worshipped the gallant gentleman, with plumed hat and flowing locks, who gets his knighthood on the field of battle, or the fair girl who, at the risk of her life, hides the future Merry Monarch from pursuing Ironsides. Nor are these legends altogether

devoid of foundation. No knight of romance was more chivalrously loyal than Montrose or Sir Edmund Verney; no story of fiction is more thrilling than that of the young officer who brought back the Royal Standard out of the enemy's camp, after Edgehill. Many and many a family had squandered blood and treasure, some were ruined, some, like brave Sir Roger Mostyn, were too poor to live in their own mansions, and had to occupy some humble dwelling until their fortunes were gradually repaired. Loyalty to the King was what had inspired so great sacrifices, it had distinguished these gentlemen from the rebels. That such men, or their sons, should ever, under any circumstances, deviate from their allegiance, might well appear a thing unthinkable, for, as the Cavalier poet sings:

"Loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game."

Another potent stimulus to loyalty was the memory of the Martyr King. It is strange that Charles, who during his life had been so cold and unsympathetic, who could pass through the streets of loyal Oxford amid stony silence, should, after his death, have been the object of such passionate devotion. But like Samson, his death harmed his enemies more than his life. The "Eikon Basilike" was one of the most widely read and influential books in our literature, and the dead King's faults were forgotten in his sufferings. Nor, worthless as he was, was his heir altogether unfitted to keep the flame alive. He was the most fascinating of mortals. He knew how to speak just the right word to capture and retain a subject's affection; and even the surly veterans of the New Model were not wholly untouched by the charm of their young King, who rode among them distributing small delicacies. He was no icicle of dignity like his father, nor an object of ridicule like his grandfather. He was able to retain his dignity with a perfect absence of stiffness. To a Quaker who

kept on his hat in the Presence, he would doff his own, remarking that it was only customary for one member of the company to remain covered. When some critical debate was proceeding in the Lords, he would sit there by the fire, petting his spaniels, or jesting with those around him. He was a familiar object to his subjects, feeding the ducks in St. James' Park, or perhaps playing Pall Mall, in the place which has preserved the name long after the game has been forgotten. Englishmen are fonder, in ordinary times, of a merry monarch than of a good one.

But all this promise was marred by the fatal defect which was, ere long, to drive the restored House from a naturally devoted nation, and to turn Cavaliers and the very Churchmen into rebels. The seed of ruin had been planted long since by the fumbling hand of James I, and it was to bear sure and bitter fruit. The splendid alliance, which had been the work of James, and to accomplish which Charles I had cheated and embittered his first Parliament, was the curse of the Stuart line. The new King and his brother were Frenchmen, with foreign sympathies and a foreign religion.

The old Tory had often let personal loyalty interfere to a dangerous extent with his love of England. To serve their country under Oliver was a thing few of them would do, and to plot for Oliver's assassination, one from which some of the best of them did not shrink. But they did sincerely believe that the country was being ruined by the Puritans, and that the King's return was the one thing which could save it. This is the whole gist of Clarendon's History, and he, in his way, loved England very dearly, and was heartbroken when a shameful sentence banished him for a second and last time. On no point was the average English gentleman more sensitive than upon his religion. He hated a canting Dissenter, who was probably a rebel into the bargain, but he joined with the Dissenter in his hatred of the Papacy. This had

become almost symbolic. With the name and creed of Rome were linked the memories of Philip and Guy Fawkes and Bloody Mary. Apart from any purely religious motive, it stood for foreign tyranny, for national humiliation, for everything that was calculated to annoy and injure Englishmen. The Martyr King, whatever else he had been, was at heart a loyal Churchman, and had sealed his faith upon the scaffold. The Cavaliers of the Restoration Parliament, albeit they might persecute the preachers, had no intention of mitigating the laws against the priests.

But the new King had come under influences of a different kind. His mother's volatile nature was at least fixed in devotion to the Roman Church, and Charles had inherited his character from her side. There had been no English Church for him and his little Court of exiles, and some of the courtiers, two of whom afterwards became members of the Cabal, succumbed to the religious influences around them. It is not to be wondered at that the young exile sought the Roman Church, like Nicodemus, by night. Nor, amid the ruin of his prospects, did he scruple to seek the support of the Catholic powers, and even of the Pope himself, in the forlorn hope of getting back his crown. Thus it came about, that although the King returned to a loyal people, and surrounded by a halo of divine right, he was tainted by the one defect that must in time move even Cavaliers and bishops to rise in mutiny.

True, the evil day was at least postponed owing to Charles' character. He was telling the truth when he remarked to his more stubborn and less attractive brother, "They will never kill me to make you King." Religion of any sort sat lightly upon him. He was not one of those men who will die, or even suffer, for a faith. The philosopher he loved most was not Bellarmine or St. Thomas, but Hobbes of Malmesbury. Like so many men of Latin

blood, he was probably attracted by the sensuous aspect of the Church's teaching. We may, perhaps, compare his faith with that of a modern statesman philosopher, who holds the riddle of the Universe to be so hard, that he is fain to adopt the one of many doubtful solutions which seems the most suitable. Even when he dreamed of restoring Catholicism in England, he made it a condition that his own power should be practically unfettered by that of the Pope, and when he was hard pressed he was quite ready to make public profession of his attachment to the Church of England, and even to connive at the cruellest injustice of Protestant fanaticism. He would infinitely have preferred running the risk of hell in the next life, to going on his travels in this one.

It was not only in religion that the King's foreign sympathies betrayed themselves. He was naturally in love with everything French, and he lived at a time when French ideals were beginning to dominate Europe. Louis XIV had come into the heritage of the cardinals. France was united under the most perfect and efficient despotism which the world had seen since the fall of Imperial Rome. Those of us who admire that enormous palace at Versailles, with its accommodation for ten thousand souls, seldom realize the deep-laid policy of which that building is the expression. For the turbulent French nobility, which had been in constant league with the foreigner, and which had proved too strong for so many kings and statesmen, was here confined in splendid but absolute durance. For the greater part of the year, the duc or comte was compelled to dance attendance upon the King, and even in the short time he was able to snatch upon his own estate, he was subject to constant espionage. For the recalcitrant, there was always the army or the Bastille. Thus fortified, it was no wonder that the glory of Le Roi Soleil aroused the envy and the emulation of less fortunate sovereigns.

Charles II was half French by birth, and wholly French by sympathy. The state to which Louis had attained was that of which he dreamed. Even a Cavalier Parliament was a degrading necessity, of which Louis would have made short work. The few regiments of guards which that Parliament grudgingly allowed him to retain were a mockery of the great armies which mustered under Condé and Turenne. Something at least he could do towards Gallicizing England. He made his Court a cheap and vulgar imitation of Versailles. The vice which had there been redeemed by infinite delicacy, appeared in swinish grossness at Whitehall. Some exquisite and fragile blossoms did indeed spring out of a soil thus manured. Sedley and Rochester live in a few precious lyrics; the rapier play of Wycherley's dialogue is none the less brilliant because the combatants are ankle-deep in filth. But all the memoirs of the reign agree in depicting the heartless grossness of the Court, in which one fair lady could quite casually expose her legs for public examination, or a baby, which had been born in the midst of the revels, could be carried off for dissection by the King and his courtiers. "No man," says Clarendon, "hath been seen to blush in the face since the King's return." Charles even appears to have made some attempt to emulate the grand monarch's autocracy, by prescribing a dress for his courtiers. But all was evidently counterfeit. The conditions which had produced Versailles did not exist in England, and a Court ceremonial needs to grow up as naturally as a flower. Besides, the average Englishman of all classes had an inherited repugnance to the French. His religion taught him to hate the Frenchman as a Papist, his constitutional instincts to scorn him as a slave, his drama and traditions to look upon him as a natural enemy, a boastful fellow in every respect his inferior. These prejudices were sure to revolt against any such policy as that of Charles II.

At the beginning of the reign, the King's sympathies were baulked of expression by the personality of his chief Minister; Clarendon, despite his long years of exile abroad, was a staunch and patriotic Englishman His solicitude for his country's welfare is evident again and again throughout the course of his historical masterpiece, and he was enamoured, in a manner characteristically English, of our Church and Constitution. He was the last man to be a party to any scheme for setting up popery, or even a despotism modelled upon Versailles. He treated Parliament with a lofty superciliousness, which helped towards his own undoing, but he would not undo the best work even of Pym. Privilege and prerogative were equally sacred in his eyes. His ideal was that of the Elizabethan statesman—a strong central power based upon law, and not an irresponsible tyranny without any law at all. He would not have had his master pursue a policy of revenge, but would have united the whole nation under the Crown, only repressing those elements of it which he believed to be incurably disruptive. In all good faith and loyalty, he held up an ideal essentially British before a master whose sympathies were French.

No wonder that he incurred shame and disgrace at the hands of a king to whom gratitude was a thing unknown. Clarendon's old-fashioned virtue was sadly out of place in the new Court. He regarded its license, so different from anything which had obtained under the last king, with open disapproval. The grave and decent ceremonial with which he surrounded his great office of Chancellor, was abhorrent to men whose conceptions of ministerial responsibility were so accommodating as those of Buckingham. It gave copious amusement to Charles and the courtiers to see this wretch, the Zimri of Dryden, making game of the proven and upright Clarendon, and it was to the mercy of such men that his master could abandon one who had grown grey in his service.

Indeed, Charles was beginning to need a victim. Even loyalty is not proof against constant disloyalty in return. Charles was a traitor indeed to the brave gentlemen who had placed him on the throne of Alfred and Elizabeth. Soon it began to be seen that all was not in tune between the most belauded of monarchs and the most devoted of Parliaments. Perhaps, as Mr. Abbot has suggested in the "Historical Review," the Cavalier complexion of the Parliament, at the outset, has been somewhat exaggerated, and certainly more than a hundred members could be found to go into the lobbies against burning the Solemn League and Covenant. But the open satisfaction of the King is enough to show, that though it may not have been as Royalist as James II's first Parliament, it was for practical purposes all the King could have desired. The first excesses of the Restoration provoked little opposition, though even Pepys looked askance at the outrage perpetrated upon the remains of such a brave Englishman as Cromwell. It was a more serious matter when Dunkirk, that second Calais, which Cromwell's arms had secured for England, was tamely handed over to Louis for a few rascal counters. The opposition to this was faint at first, but it grew into a storm, which presently was diverted from Charles on to the head of his Minister.

It was a shock to the loyalty of old Cavaliers, who had been ruined in the cause, when they saw the money which might have been devoted to their redress sacrificed to the licentiousness of a wasteful and Gallicized Court. Members of Parliament, in particular, were beginning to doubt whether the money they voted for supply would be expended in the interests of their country, and from this it was but a step to demanding control over the money voted. Thus the prerogative was once more trenched upon. Again, to a people accustomed to see the hand of God in everything, the two frightful calami-

ties of fire and pestilence, which overwhelmed London, seemed a visible judgment of God upon the new regime.

If Charles' troubles had been only domestic, it is probable that he might have lived over them, without the desperate struggles of the Popish Plot and the Whig reaction. But England was, by this time, drawn into the whirlpool of European politics. It was no longer possible to pursue the peaceful course of Charles I, or to fight out our own battles without interference, as we had done during the Civil War. France, our ally during the Commonwealth, was now threatening to dominate the Continent, and Dutch trade rivalry was still acute. Spain had now definitely ceased to count as a first-class European power, and it was with France and Holland that our policy was mainly concerned. A patriotic Englishman might have hesitated, at the beginning of the reign, which of these to oppose. As the situation developed, it became more and more apparent that the real enemy was Louis. However much we might quarrel with Holland, it had already become the fixed and traditional maxim of our policy that the Low Countries must not fall into the hands of any great Continental power. The Dutch Republic was evidently the prize at which Louis XIV was aiming. While the Dutch army was going to pieces under the De Witts, and the forts, which were the sole protection of that exposed frontier, were being neglected, the great professional host of France was preparing to strike once, and strike no more. It only remained for the equally formidable diplomacy of Versailles to isolate the victim, and if possible, to find some ally to crush the sea power, which might, on the outbreak of war, sweep French commerce from the sea.

It was a different France from that of the cardinals that now confronted our diplomacy. They had been content to pursue a safe and prudent policy, strengthening their country without unduly alarming the rest of Europe.

But the personality of Louis soon changed all this. From his earliest years he had found himself the centre of unbounded adulation; he was the most renowned monarch in Europe, and everybody told him so. The many portraits of him tell but one tale, that of a high and sensitive spirit, warped and stunted by the Satanic pride which hardened round him like a shell. His will was God's law, and nothing was fit to stand in its way. With an ability vastly inferior to that of the cardinals, for the magnificent Louis had the talent of an industrious office clerk, he plunged into a policy of aggression, which they had been too wise to adopt. Even the Pope was not exempt from his bully's violence.

It was not at Holland, but at Flanders, that his ambition was at first directed. He even gave a niggardly support to the Dutch in their war against England. This war, which was the heritage of the Commonwealth, first revealed the unsatisfactory nature of Charles' Government, and made men sigh for another Oliver. It was a struggle of the same desperate nature as the first Dutch War, and, as far as bravery went, there was nothing to choose between the two sides. The four days' battle in the Downs was one of the most desperately contested fights in all history, and ended in our fleet getting considerably the worst of it. The war, however, had been fairly satisfactory from our point of view, until an utterly unexpected and humiliating disaster showed England to what a pass we had been brought by the King's Government. Negotiations for peace were already proceeding, and England had asked for an armistice, which was refused. In spite of this, our Nell Gwyn Defender went calmly on with a policy of retrenchment, and actually laid up the ships which should have been watching for every movement of De Ruyter. We know what followed; the ominous news that a great fleet had appeared off Harwich, and then that they had arrived in the Nore,

stormed Sheerness, and were burning the King's ships up the Medway, even threatening London itself. Never had a powerful country been subjected to a more exasperating reverse, and the King himself, so far from being heartbroken at the catastrophe, was hunting moths to the delectation of his mistresses. No wonder that the London citizens, driven almost to distraction, were calling out in the streets for Parliament to be summoned. And no wonder that poor Clarendon, already unpopular, had to bear the blame of a situation for which he was only partially responsible.

The navy had sadly degenerated since the days of Blake. This was not altogether the fault of Charles, who found his naval administration, on his accession, crippled by debt. But apathy and corruption were allowed to do their work here, as elsewhere. The experiment of making soldiers into sailors had answered surprisingly well, but it was not the same thing as making captains out of courtiers, whose sole qualification for the post was their bravery. From the Duke of York downwards, these courtiers went to sea, much to the prejudice of the old genuine sea-captains or tarpaulins. Not that the service was bad for the courtiers themselves, since even the gross Dorset caught a breath of clear sea air and seamanly spirit, in the swinging song he indites to the ladies on land :

> " Should foggy Opdam chance to know
> Our sad and dismal story,
> The Dutch would scorn so weak a foe,
> And quit their fort at Goree,
> For what resistance can they find
> From men who've left their hearts behind ?
> With a fal-lal-lal-lal-la ! "

But there was admiration for the tarpaulin, even in Court circles. Wycherley's masterpiece, the " Plain Dealer," is clear proof of this. Macaulay, who treats of the play in one of his essays, has characteristically failed

to appreciate the character of the hero, in whom he can only see a ferocious sensualist, the worst even of Wycherley's creations. Captain Manly is certainly neither a moral nor an amiable person, but he is genuinely in love with his profession, and he is ready to sacrifice himself for his duty. This is, and is intended to be, the redeeming feature of his character. He has obtained his command "by honour, not interest," and he has chosen to sink his ship rather than let her fall into the hands of the Dutch. He gives his last twenty pounds to his boat's crew: "What," he says, "would you have the poor brave honest fellows want?" This trait in Manly shines brighter by contrast with the prosperous City alderman, whose only concern with the war is that it spoils his trade.

It would have been well if something of Manly's spirit could have been infused among the Court. The case of the sailors and those who worked in the docks was pitiable. The navy was kept manned by unsparing use of the press, which sometimes was reduced to the scriptural expedient of laying hold on the halt and maimed, and compelling them to come in. Pepys' Diary is full of the sad cases of men of every rank who were perishing from want of pay. To such a pass had things arrived, that many English sailors actually took service with the Dutch, who paid in ready money, and not in promises. When De Ruyter's fleet was in the Medway, some of these traitors were actually heard calling upon their old shipmates to join them.

The descent upon the Medway was of the nature of a humiliation rather than a disaster, and the peace concluded at Breda was by no means unfavourable to England. So far the royal policy was, in its aim, perfectly defensible from the patriotic standpoint, and for its bungling execution it was possible to find a scapegoat. The King and the nation alike were only too glad to be rid of Clarendon, and the wildest accusations were levelled

against him. He had negotiated the Portuguese marriage in order to place the succession to the throne in his own family, he had built a palace for himself from the proceeds of Dunkirk. The cry was:

> "Three sights to be seen,
> Dunkirk, Tangier, and a barren queen,"

all three charges, significantly enough, being levelled at the Minister's pro-French policy, of which the Portuguese marriage had been part. Already the nation was beginning to recognize its real enemy.

Louis was now showing his hand. The death of Philip IV afforded him a pretext for enlarging his frontiers at the expense of the inert and helpless Spanish Empire. Nothing could have suited his purpose better than strife between the two Protestant powers. His two great commanders were soon at work; the Franche Comté fell before Condé, Turenne was capturing fortress after fortress in Flanders. Then a dramatic check was put to French ambition by a policy worthy of Cromwell himself, which united the three Protestant powers of the north, and gave Louis to understand that so far he might go, but no further. For a short time England, Holland and Sweden are found standing together, and even opposing Louis with a hauteur equal to his own.

It was high time that something of the sort should be done. The third great struggle between Protestant and Catholic was obviously beginning. France had now definitely broken with her anomalous attitude as leader of European Protestantism. Her great Catholic rival had dropped out of the running, the Austrian branch of the Hapsburgs was fighting for its life against the Infidel, and Louis had stepped into the place of Philip II and Ferdinand. He had, thanks to Louvois, an army so much superior to any other that could be brought against it, as to seem for all practical purposes invincible; he was beginning to create a navy; under the auspices of Col-

bert he had built up a financial system, which designed to make France a commercial and industrial power, and to reinforce the English Navigation Acts by striking at Holland in her most vital and vulnerable point, her trade. It was quite possible that he might become a second Charlemagne, and add the crown of the Cæsars to that of the Bourbons. Though Louis treated the Pope with no more respect than he showed to anybody else who opposed him, he was sincere and intolerant enough in his religion. He would make Europe Catholic, provided always that the Catholic Faith centred in his own person. The policy of the Edict of Nantes was already crumbling to its fall. Had Louis conquered Holland, it was his intention to restore the Church by methods little inferior to those of Alva. Such an egotist did not limit his schemes by the mere facts of the case, and what his mercy was towards his enemies, the Palatinate and the Dragonnades might bear witness.

To a country like England, which had already taken part in one desperate struggle with Rome, and burned with impotent longing to take part in another, which had seen Cromwell's Government revive the glories of Drake, and stand forth in the eyes of Europe as the defender of the Reformation, the crisis which was thus rapidly developing must soon have grown apparent. The Edict of Nantes was still in force, but two things were plain—first that a Catholic power had arisen as strong and ambitious as Philip II's Spain; secondly, that this power visibly threatened our old Protestant ally. We have already seen how powerfully the Reformation cause had drawn together England and Holland in the past. Even the reckoning for the gravest humiliations could be postponed, when the cause was in danger. If England could forget Amboina during the Thirty Years' War, she could forget the Medway in the presence of Louis.

Fortunate would she have been had she possessed, at this juncture, even such a ruler as Charles I. He, at least, was set upon advancing the welfare of his kingdom as well as he could, according to his lights. If he could not rise above kingcraft, he was at least an honest craftsman. It is probable that Clarendon, had he continued in power, would have pursued a policy substantially in accordance with his methods. The old Minister was not possessed of comprehensive ideals, he had been a party to the sale of Dunkirk, and there is no reason to think that he appreciated the gravity of the French menace. He might have been beguiled into an attack upon Holland, either to avenge our honour, or for economic reasons, but he was a true Englishman and a loyal Churchman, and he would never consciously have betrayed his country to France or Rome. His master was ready to do both.

With the fall of Clarendon and the death of his colleague and friend, Southampton, a new prospect opens for Charles. At last he had shaken himself free from the control of his too virtuous and old-fashioned counsellor, and he was able to mould his Government in accordance with his own ideas. Moreover, though he had contrived for the moment to divert the rising torrent of popular disfavour, the loyalty of the country, and even of the Cavalier Parliament, was too visibly on the wane. He loathed the accumulating trammels that were imposed upon him by the English Constitution, and he would fain have been a king indeed, like Louis. Besides, he was actually and secretly a Roman Catholic. His dealings with Rome are still wrapped in obscurity, and are unlikely ever to be fully brought to light, but they form a fascinating subject for speculation. We hear of a young Jesuit, who hovered about the Court, and ministered in secret to the King his father; for Charles, while yet a boy and an exile, had formed a mysterious and romantic attachment to a lady, whose name, owing to one of those gleams of

honour that cast a fitful light over his memory, will remain for ever unsullied by such a connection. But to dive into these mysteries is a task from which we must refrain. It is enough to know for a certainty, that at the hour of England's, and Protestant Europe's need, the King of England was a traitor and a Catholic.

Charles had every motive for joining hands with Louis. He was as sincere about his religion as he could be about anything, except his pleasures. Besides, Rome was, at this time, everywhere in alliance with despotism. There could be no better way of reducing England to his sway than by making her Catholic, since even loyal Anglicans were so hard to manage. On this point, despite his shrewdness, he made one of those miscalculations characteristic of a stranger in a strange land. He looked at the English people as Napoleon looked at the Spanish, from the outside. In less than a century and a half, England had submitted to five separate reformations and counter-reformations, and it was not inconceivable that a folk so changeable would submit to be reformed again. Of the intensity of the anti-Catholic feeling, and the impossibility of ever re-establishing popery except by overwhelming force, he had as yet no conception.

It has been suggested, and with some plausibility, that Charles' motive in forming the Triple Alliance was actually to seal the fate of his principal ally, by finally marking her out for the vengeance of Louis. He was quite shrewd and treacherous enough to do this, while availing himself of the popular sentiment against Louis. It was only natural that he should hate the Dutch. They were Protestant, and given to that form of Protestantism which Charles, by temperament and experience, had the best cause for loathing; they were republican, and they had inflicted upon him the most unpleasant jar he had received since his coming to the throne. Besides, the Triple Alliance had proved how necessary it was for

Louis to make sure of his support. There was money in an attack on Holland, and money was what Charles needed before all other things.

Thus it came about that Charles deliberately sold his country, and concluded one of the most shameful bargains in history. And yet it is one of his few acts for which we can feel respect. He was at least sincere in advancing the cause of his religion, and he must have known how great a risk he was running. It would be beside the mark to complain of his lack of patriotism. The word had no meaning for him, because he was not, and did not feel, as an Englishman. For such men as he, sons of one land condemned to realize their career in another, the Roman Church, catholic and universal, offers an irresistible attraction. And so Charles committed himself to the fatal step which was the beginning of the end for the Stuart line; he entered into the pay of one whom it was his kingly duty to oppose to the death, and he stood committed to impose the Roman yoke on his country, with the aid of French money and French arms. His father would have died rather than be party to such a scheme.

Even if Charles had been a native Englishman, it would have taken more than his shrewdness to realize that the joint attack upon the Dutch, the firstfruits of this bargain, would not be popular in England, and that his people were capable of setting material interests aside, when all they held dearest was at stake. He had a counsellor who was more brilliant and wicked even than himself, and knew well how to play upon the passions of his countrymen. Shaftesbury was now Lord Chancellor. Even he had been hoodwinked about the secret clauses at Dover, which were confided only to the Catholic members of the Cabal, and it was a slight he never forgave. As yet, however, he was all loyalty and hatred of the Dutch. "The States of Holland," he declared in Parliament, "are England's eternal enemy, both by interest

and inclination." The war, he told them, was absolutely necessary and unavoidable, and he skilfully worked upon their patriotism by suggesting that the Dutch would never have dared to break their treaties and dishonour our flag, had they not reckoned upon Parliament giving niggardly and grudging support to the King. Among the Somers Tracts is one emanating from him, in which he puts the English case as clearly and logically as it was possible to do. He sets up the brazen doctrine so dear to men of his stamp, that the real bond between nations is interest and not sentiment. We have no interest in attacking the French, whereas, if we do not ruin the Dutch, they will ruin us. Delenda est Carthago. In justice to Shaftesbury, we must allow that the tract is almost redeemed by one far-sighted observation worthy of his great intellect: "The fleet are the walls of England. To command by sea, not to make conquests by land, that is the true interest of England."

The heart of the nation was not in this third Dutch War. The unprovoked attempt of two powerful nations to crush a small one, the alliance with a Catholic power to destroy one of the bulwarks of the Reformation, was an attempt so patently wicked that the conscience of every respectable man revolted against it. Evelyn, good Royalist though he was, was shocked by its cynicism, and especially by the treacherous attack upon the Smyrna Fleet with which it commenced. "Surely," he says, "this was a quarrel slenderly grounded, and not becoming Christian neighbours. We are like to thrive accordingly." Nor did he stand alone. Lord Ossory, he tells us, had often deplored to him that he was engaged in it; while the brave Lord Sandwich, who perished in action, was utterly against the war from the beginning, and abhorred the attack upon the Smyrna Fleet. It was not only among the upper class that the war was unpopular. Pamphlets were circulated among the fleet

openly recommending cowardice, and it was considered necessary to issue another pamphlet, which still remains, exhorting the tars to do their duty. That anybody can have thought such a step necessary, is sufficient commentary upon the unpopularity of the war. It is no wonder, then, that Evelyn's foreboding was realized, and we reaped little honour out of the war. The Dutch defended themselves like heroes, the attack upon the Smyrna Fleet was ignominiously repulsed, the combined fleets were powerless to crush De Ruyter. It was by the mercy of Providence that we failed, for had Holland been crushed, it must have fared ill with us and all Europe at the hands of Louis. ¶

There is a tract written in 1676, which expresses the real feeling of the nation better than Shaftesbury's special pleading. It takes the form of a letter to a Dutchman, and lays down, as the basis of our policy, the Balance of Power, and the maintenance of the Protestant interest. The author recognizes that the bias of the Court is naturally against Holland, that the heir to the throne is a Papist and the Ministers openly in the French interest. When the King dies, and another Parliament is summoned, the true sentiments of the nation will appear.

Within a few days of the declaration of war, Charles ventured upon his second move in the Dover conspiracy. Keeping within the letter of the law, but perilously straining his prerogative, he issued a Declaration of Indulgence for Catholics and Presbyterians alike. This was in imitation of the Edict of Nantes, and was meant to be the first step towards setting up a regime like that of Louis, in which Catholics were supreme and Protestants, for the nonce, tolerated. The reply of the Cavalier Parliament was swift and conclusive. It passed the Test Act. Charles, who had a shrewd eye for facts, and loved himself even more than he loved his religion, learnt his lesson, and the scheme was abandoned during his lifetime.

Upon our withdrawal from the war, which took place after two inglorious years, he actually entered into friendly relations with Holland, now no longer a republic, and arranged the momentous union of William and Mary. He also gave the Princess Anne in marriage to a Protestant and Danish prince.

But the mischief was now afoot, and some inkling of the King's leanings had got abroad. To make things worse, his brother, the heir to the throne, openly espoused the Catholic faith. An American statesman once said that you cannot fool all the people all the time, and this was just what Charles had tried to do. The relinquishment of his Catholic scheme did not prevent him from continuing to sell himself to Louis. He obtained money from Parliament for a French War, and from Louis as the price of his neutrality. Unspeakably sordid were the details of the bargaining. The Ambassador at Paris, Ralph Montagu, was sickened by the part he had to play. In a letter to Danby, who was himself but an unwilling participant in such work, he first describes how he has haggled with Louis about the exact price, and then adds, "You may be confident of my secrecy about this whole affair, both for the King's, your lordship's and my own sake, for it would be no popular nor creditable thing if it were known."

Unfortunately Montagu's secrecy was not a thing to confide in. Louis was playing a double game, and it would not do to have Charles too strong, since he had lately been not only expensive but refractory. He therefore struck the severest possible blow at his pensioner's credit, by seeing to it that Montagu's transactions were brought to the light of day. The immediate victim was Danby, but Charles himself was directly implicated. "I wonder," cried one Member of Parliament, when the papers were read, "I wonder that the House sits so silent when they see themselves sold for six millions of livres to

the French." "I hope now," said another, "gentlemen's eyes are open by the design on foot to destroy our Government and our liberties."

The feelings of the nation, already overstrained by constant irritation, found vent in a wild and, to all appearances, insane outburst of wrath and panic. Owing to the perjury of a few consummate scoundrels, and a good deal of favouring coincidence, the whole nation, from the highest to the lowest, became obsessed by the idea of a diabolical plot, hatched by the Catholics, with the object of murdering the King, and generally realizing the aims of Guy Fawkes. Even the highest names, those of the Queen and the Duke of York, were not exempt from suspicion. As is so often the case with large masses of men, the people were trying to express, in their blundering and cruel fashion, what was, after all, the essential fact of the situation. For there had been brewing a Popish plot of the most sinister description, and the King himself had been among the chief conspirators. Even now the plot was not dead, but only in abeyance till the death of a libertine, who was too wily to flaunt his real feelings, should put upon the throne a Papist, to whom the Catholic faith was all in all. The episode of the Popish Plot was, in fact, the wildest and most grotesque outburst of patriotism ever known; it sprang from the consciousness of some evil and secret force threatening our existence, and the almost frantic desire to give this impalpable thing a local habitation and a name. Amid the confusion and fury of his subjects, Charles was at last induced to take the fatal step for which his enemies had been longing—he dissolved the Cavalier Parliament, and another was elected, under circumstances not dissimilar to those which had given birth to the Long Parliament of Charles I.

The King was now faced by a Parliament as bitter and hostile as that which had been led by Pym. The nation

at large, and especially the citizens of London, were in such a state of panic that there was no saying to what extremities they might not proceed. Yet how different is this first struggle between Whig and Tory from that of nearly forty years since between Crown and Puritan! After a shameful faction fight, in which there hardly appears a decent character or a decent action, the Crown emerges victorious, and stronger than ever before. No Cromwell, not even a Pym or an Eliot appeared on the scene, and the grim earnestness of the old Covenanter or Presbyterian was replaced by the finesse of men whose only object was to get power and place, and who stuck at nothing in their pursuit of them. Patriotism seemed to have gone to sleep.

To understand the causes of this change, we must pause in our narrative, in order to describe what was taking place in the soul of the nation. Hitherto we have watched the conflict between the spontaneous and glowing spirit of the Elizabethans, and the deep, self-conscious Puritan enthusiasm. We have seen how each of them gloriously succeeded, and how each, when its work was done, fell into dissension or decay. But there was a third spirit, if we may accurately talk of spirit in such a connection, which was distinct from both of these, and which was now coming to its own. This we may best designate by the name of materialism. It tends to exalt the brain, or rational faculty, at the expense of the emotions and the soul. It is exact, calculating, and in the vulgar sense of the word, scientific.

To a discerning eye, this tendency may be perceived in England long before the Restoration. It was implicit in both the Elizabethan and the Puritan systems, and the glow of enthusiasm had only to cool in order for it to emerge. We have seen how intimately the Tudor system was bound up with the idea of Law, and it was not too violent a transition from the Law of God to the all-

sufficient and impersonal mechanism of the universe. Hooker comes very near to making the transition; Bacon, the father of modern materialism, comes still nearer. But neither of them pushed his principles to a conclusion; even Bacon could write prose that was almost poetry, and shrank in scorn from atheism. As the Tudor system fell into decay, its adherents began to adopt a colder and less enthusiastic attitude in the face of vital problems. Their poetry, for lack of inspiration, became abstruse and even scientific. Phineas Fletcher could write a long allegory of the human body, which he called the "Purple Island," while Donne positively revelled in such conceits. A new type of controversialist appeared in Chillingworth, admirably moderate, who could treat of God and salvation with as little heat as if he were engaged upon some problem in mathematics. Appeals to the brain were generally becoming more fashionable than those to the heart, and toleration naturally throve.

It may seem altogether paradoxical to maintain that the Puritan ideal also contained the germs of materialism, especially when we consider how every statesman and soldier of the Commonwealth had the words of Scripture constantly on his lips, and how even the Roundhead Council of War could pause in their deliberations to investigate the case of a woman who claimed to be inspired. But it must be remembered that the idea of the Reformation was to replace the authority of the Church by the private judgment of the individual. In Scotland, where Calvinism was in its greatest strength, the very peasants were taught to reason and argue about matters of faith in a manner which has, even to this day, sensibly affected the Scottish character. Even where the enthusiasm was most intense, there was no holding the saints together, and the passion for first principles outran the bounds of theology. In theology itself there was no logical halting-place. Luther had declared that he would

submit neither to Pope nor Council, but only to the authority of Scripture. What was to prevent some more advanced Luther from saying that he would submit to no authority whatever except his own reason? Milton himself was dangerously unsound upon the Godhead of the Son; a time might come when God the Father would also be called in question. Nonconformity with Rome might easily develop into nonconformity with Christianity. Herbert Spencer himself was the conscious and consistent product of a long line of stern Nonconformists. Besides all this it must be borne in mind that of the three pillars of materialism, the denial of free will was also a main pillar of Calvinism.

Among the four hundred members who remained at Westminster after the loyal minority had rallied to the standard of Edgehill, there sat one, distinguished by the singular handsomeness of his face, who took part in their proceedings, and even received money at their hands, but who was actuated by a spirit very different from that of the Presbyterians around him. John Selden was, in fact, a herald of the new age tricked out in the garments of the old. Of all his works only one has survived as literature, and that is his exquisite "Table Talk," which excited the admiration of a man so differently constituted as Coleridge. It is the atmosphere of these maxims rather than anything they definitely say, which constitutes their significance. Selden is the forerunner of the eighteenth-century dislike of enthusiasm; he surveys the issues about which his contemporaries were ready to die, with the supercilious glance of the man of the world. He displays an indifference almost Voltairean towards religious disputes. "Divines," he says, "should not be suffered to go a hair beyond their bounds, for fear of breeding confusion," while to the question whether the Church or Scripture should be the judge of religion he answers, "In truth neither, but the State." Of his

attitude towards enthusiasts the following is characteristic. "The second Person is made of a piece of bread by the Papists, the third person is made of his own frenzy, malice, ignorance, and folly, by the Roundhead. To all these the Spirit is intituled." Such a man could not fail to exercise a considerable influence, since Milton himself calls him "The chief of learned men reputed in this land."

On the Cavalier side the same spirit was abroad, out of sheer opposition to the Puritans. It became the fashion among the Tantivies to class every sort of religious zeal as canting hypocrisy. Butler, who gave voice to their feelings after the Restoration, opens his satire and gives his own summary of the Civil War in the lines:

> "When civil dudgeon first grew high,
> And men fell out, they knew not why;
> When hard words, jealousies and fears
> Set folks together by the ears,
> And made them fight, like mad or drunk,
> For dame Religion as for punk,"

which is only a coarser rendering of Selden's views. The nation had had enough of fighting for the millennium. The triumph of the saints had turned out to be the triumph of the preachers and major-generals, and there were few who wanted to repeat the experiment. Religion was not worth dying for, which meant that it had ceased to be of vital importance to the majority of Englishmen. The agitation against the Popish Plot was essentially secular, and directed against foreign tyranny.

It is now that we see the commencement of a momentous change in our literature. The old forms, which had been so well adapted to express every shade and change of feeling, go out of fashion and give place to a cast-iron rigidity which it required the Romantic impulse to break through. Such developments are not accidental, and the causes which shape the metres are shaping at the same

time the heart of nations. Waves of feeling, whose crests mingle with the stars, sweep over them, as they swept over Athens after Marathon, and over Arabia at the call of the Prophet, and then follows the back-suck and reaction, a decline of artistic spontaneity, and a refuge in imitation and formality. In the period that follows the Restoration we find just such a lowering of emotional intensity.

This period, though it begins in the seventeenth, is usually associated in our minds with the eighteenth century. Matthew Arnold for once hit upon the correct phrase when he spoke of it as a Prose Age, and said of Dryden and Pope that their verse was prose rather than poetry. Though the term "eighteenth century" is not strictly accurate, it has come to be associated in our minds with the trend of thought and feeling that finds expression in the balanced couplets of Pope, the patient, painstaking genius of Hume and Joseph Butler, and the polish and brocade of Chesterfield.

It would only be a modern critic, to whom passion and passionate sympathy are taboo, who could place the poetry of this age in equal comparison with that of the blossoming periods of our literature. Some there are, indeed, who would have it that the woods are more beautiful amid the ruin of December than during the riot of May, and these would talk of Pope as a master poet in the same sense as they would use the word of Shelley. Some, more wise, would draw consolation from Shelley's own reflection, that if winter comes spring cannot be far behind. Such times of incubation and quiescence are, indeed, as necessary as the February floods and March winds, and their bleakness is not necessarily that of death. In many cases, perhaps the majority, the analogy does not hold good, and the creative energy of a people has died in its sleep, or risen again a pitiable thing, the ghost of its former self. The coldness of the Eclectics was not

followed by any revival of Italian art, nor was Canaletto the forerunner of some new and more wonderful Titian Some there are, like Carlyle, who would have it that this is actually the case in England, and that since the fall of the Protectorate she has never got up again. But this view, which would ignore the Romantic impulse and the struggle with Napoleon, may be dismissed as fantastic.

Moreover, we must not be understood to imply that the Prose Age was incapable of producing characteristic and valuable work of its own. As its very name hints, it saw the creation of an English prose style which, if it lacked some of the fanciful resources of Browne and the gorgeousness of Milton, was at least a more lucid and serviceable instrument than theirs. Moreover, the iron age of the arts was the golden age of science. The age which had almost forgotten Shakespeare, was justly proud to have brought forth a Newton, though it is a poor consolation for those who have lost the music of the stars to have succeeded in calculating their exact orbits. But, whether our feelings are those of wonder or regret, we must at least admit that the England of Locke and Newton did, in fact, give the impulse to that movement of thought which, transplanted to France, was to lead directly up to the French Revolution. If the ideals of Boileau were to make a shameful conquest of English poetry, it was to English thought that we must trace the main sources of the so-called Enlightenment.

In the reign of Charles II we have one of the last characteristic masterpieces of national architecture. The destruction of the Gothic St. Paul's gave Sir Christopher Wren his golden opportunity of fixing for ever in stone the ideal of an age strangely divorced from the faith and energy that had found voice in the old Cathedral. The uprush of the Gothic is now utterly vanquished in the spacious and deliberate curves of the Restoration. The horizontal has triumphed, as much as it was ever to

triumph in England. The thoughtful dome, the severe tracts of wall, the easy lines of roof and column, all proclaim it as one of the most superb among the temples of this world. There are the calm of the philosopher and the spaciousness of philosophy, but of Christian love and fire there is no trace. St. Paul's is more of this world even than St. Peter's. Beneath those tremendous heights that vault the Apostle's tomb, and amid those almost unthinkable spaces, there is borne upon the mind that here is a fitting spot to centre the universal Church, an overpowering sense, as from the naked heavens, of divine omnipotence and human frailty. In the more sober atmosphere of St. Paul's there is not the same inducement to awe. We are satisfied, but not staggered, by its spaciousness. Its beauties take us with as facile an appeal as the prose of Addison. The human mind is terribly at ease in St. Paul's.

Such was the temple of the Restoration, but what of its philosophy? It was not Milton or Hooker who dominated the Court of Charles II, but Thomas Hobbes, who, though most of his work had been accomplished before the Restoration, perfectly embodied its spirit. In his very diction we can see the change. Instead of the coloured imaginative prose of Browne and Taylor, Hobbes has made of the English language a powerful machine, nicely calculated to accomplish certain defined ends, with the utmost efficiency and exactitude.

Such philosophies are the natural product of a diminished intensity of feeling. Holbach in the eighteenth, and Haeckel in the nineteenth century, have said much the same as Hobbes, only in different words. The common ground upon which they all unite is a distaste for thinking poetically, or understanding the imagination of others. A theoretical recognition they may indeed give, but it is natural to them to explain away in physical terms the higher manifestations of passion or enthusiasm. Rever-

ence is almost unknown to them, the condition after which they strive is a dispassionate empirical coldness.

There is much indignation, even nowadays, among such philosophers and their disciples, when they are roundly described as atheists, materialists and the like. Much more must this have been the case when, as in the days of Hobbes, such charges were actually dangerous. For all Hobbes's rather transparent qualifications of his theory, a Hobbeist had naturally come to mean much the same thing as an unbeliever. It was this that drew him into violent controversy with Bramhall. Hobbes gives a theoretical recognition to God as readily as Spencer to his Unknowable Power. But God is only allowed into the universe provided He is, and does, nothing whatever in practice, and any idea we may form about Him is only the resultant of certain material causes affecting the mechanism of the brain. The universe is a machine grinding out effect from cause by rigid rules, and of this machine man is a part. That is all we know on earth, and all we need to know.

The philosopher of a Prose Age proceeds to construct a man after his own image. Here there is some similarity between his opinions and those of his contemporary, La Rochefoucauld. Both made a point of reducing passion to its lowest and most sordid elements, but in the one case we are dealing with a high-minded disillusioned idealist, in that of Hobbes only with a complacent materialist. The very word imagination signifies nothing to him but "decaying sense"; hope is "appetite with an opinion of obtaining"; pity "arises from an imagination that a like calamity may befall oneself," and so forth. The lust for pleasure, or for power, lies at the root of all human action.

Upon such a conception of man, our philosopher bases his idea of the State. Of course, any kind of patriotism or disinterested feeling is out of the question. Men are all

naturally at war with one another, and if they were only left to themselves they would go about killing and robbing one another like so many wild beasts, or supermen. However, such a state of things is apt to prove inconvenient, and it would be to the advantage of all concerned to agree upon some form of society, in which such tendencies should be held in check. This is really an insoluble problem. How such creatures as Hobbes's men are to be depended upon to observe any contract for a moment longer than they are compelled to do so, by actual force, is not easy to explain. However, at this vital point Hobbes slips a card, and invests the contract with a kind of sacred nature. Here is his only inconsistency, yet upon this, as well as upon his monstrous view of human nature, the whole structure of his State depends.

From this point all proceeds with mathematical precision. Force being the only consideration which has any weight with a Hobbeist man, an irresistible central power has got to be created. This need not necessarily be a monarchy, but Hobbes thinks it on the whole the best, as a number of jarring wills does not tend to efficiency. Once established, the sovereign is to be absolute, and even the conduct of the national religion is to be placed in his hands. Thus, we have an ideal of the State which shuts out any idea of passion or reverence, and would serve as well to justify a Cromwell, or a Borgia, as that elect minister of God, Charles II.

No wonder that Cavaliers of the old school were shocked by such teaching. All their loyalty and sacrifice counted for nothing, and the divine right, which had meant so much to the first two Stuarts, was now to be explained away as a muddle-headed kind of selfishness. Much more did they incline towards the theories of Robert Filmer, a thinker unworthy to be mentioned in the same breath with Hobbes. In place of the appeal to human nature, Filmer goes to history, and weaves a theory not more

absurd in its results, but less plausible in its reasoning, than that of Hobbes. Adam, he tells us, was the first king, and his rights descended by primogeniture to the House of Stuart. To fortify this view, we have the usual scholastic arguments against democracy. Here again there is scant opportunity for patriotism, since the people are unfit to manage their own affairs, and it is both right and expedient that they should submit themselves humbly to the ruler with whom God has provided them. Upon some such philosophy as this reposed the Anglican theory of Divine Right. But even this was not proof against attacks on the Church.

Restoration politics and political theory were no more inspiring than the systems of these two philosophers. Take the case of Temple, one of the most respectable of them, the cautious, time-serving diplomatist, honest enough in his way, provided always that his honesty did not involve too many risks. His politics incline towards a fatalism, which has none of the fire of Calvin, but is only too common in our own day. Human nature, he thinks, is much the same all the world over, and differences of government are mainly due to differences of climate. In his estimate of the Dutch character, he would reduce their dogged valour to causes purely physical, dependent partly upon the atmosphere they breathe, and partly upon the food they eat. There is little stimulus to patriotism in such doctrines, and Temple is of the Prose Age.

One of the few exceptions to this colourless tendency was, curiously enough, the man who was by profession a Trimmer, and deliberately advocated a wise moderation in all things. Halifax was the constant opponent of France, and a patriot of a by no means cold or prosaic order. It was he who had made, at the risk of his head, the gallant and successful stand which defeated the Exclusion Bill; it was he who flung up his hat in court upon the acquittal of the Seven Bishops. Yet he despised

the people: "They are generally either so dead that they cannot move, or so bad that they cannot be reclaimed." Parties he detested, "the best of parties is a kind of conspiracy against the rest of the nation." His ideal statesman, the Trimmer, is the man who safely steers between the Whig Scylla and the Tory Charybdis; he is, in fact, one who is all for his country, and not at all for any faction. "Our Trimmer is far from idolatry in other things; in one thing only he cometh somewhat near to it; his country is in some degree his idol. . . . He would rather die than see a spire of English grass trampled down by a foreign trespasser."

Halifax is sorely grieved (he writes in 1684) at the state of the nation, which is like a mine rendered useless for want of being worked. The prospect of the lilies of France triumphing over the roses of England might well bring the Trimmer to the brink of despair. Yet such fears were more than justified during the closing years of Charles II. The King had triumphed, almost beyond hope, but at how fatal a price! The crisis came during the Oxford Parliament, when the Whigs thought they had driven him into a corner for lack of means. It was then that Charles, with dramatic suddenness, came down and dissolved Parliament, and sent them and their retainers flying to all points of the compass, in headlong panic. The fact which they had left out of their calculations was that Charles and Louis had managed to come to terms, and that the traitor monarch could carry on his government without resort to Parliament.

English policy was now absolutely in the hands of Louis. We had ceased to count in the affairs of Europe. Never had Europe had such need of England's strong arm. The Turk was thundering at the gates of Vienna; Germany was paralysed; only William of Orange remained, passive but defiant, facing Louis. Both Spanish Kingdom and German Empire seemed to be on the point of falling into

the hands of Le Roi Soleil; aggressions of the most cynical kind, only to be remedied by the armies of Moltke, were taking place upon the German frontier. And yet England never stirred. The domestic tie, which had newly bound her to William, was loosened, and she sank into an ignoble impotence, which might at any time change into actual alliance with France. Meanwhile Charles was enjoying his shameful triumph to the full. The effort of the Whigs had been made, and it had failed. The party was crushed, and the discovery of the Rye House Plot sealed their discomfiture. The machinery of elections was brought under the control of the Crown, as it had never been before; James II was able well-nigh to nominate his first Parliament. Only a miracle could save the ideal of divine right from triumphing in England, as it had done on the Continent.

That miracle was to be supplied by the character of the new monarch. Only an infatuation so monstrous and so perverse as that of James could have driven the nation into mutiny. Even the fact of the King being a Catholic could not, by itself, have shaken his position; Argyll and Monmouth were soon crushed. But when a Popish plot was put into motion, in full light of day; when the laws were openly dispensed with; a professional army formed to crush opposition; Catholics thrust into all sorts of offices, and, worst of all, an Irish army got ready for use in England, the situation became intolerable even to divines.

And yet James was, in his way, a worthier monarch than his brother. He had at least some respect for his country's honour, and this turned out to be as fatal to him as his very faults. Even at the crisis of his fate, he would not submit to being the creature of Louis, nor would he owe his salvation to French arms. It was owing to this independence on the part of the English King that Louis made the greatest mistake of his career,

and diverted to the Rhine the armies which could certainly have kept William of Orange at home. Even in the hour of his utmost need, when he was fighting for his throne in Ireland, James rejected with honourable indignation the counsel of those French advisers who would have had him subdue his Protestant subjects by massacre.

For his plan to create a standing army, there was a great deal to be said from the purely patriotic standpoint, and the debate upon the subject in the Commons makes interesting reading. It is a question even now hotly debated, whether a professional army or a citizen militia is preferable, as a means of national defence. If England was to make her influence felt in European politics, she must maintain an establishment capable of matching itself against the trained hosts of the Continent. One member, a Sir Winston Churchill, sarcastically remarked that to judge by the speeches of the Opposition, the Beefeaters might be called an army. On the other side, it was urged that the true way of military salvation lay in remodelling the territorial and citizen militia, and in strengthening the navy. The regular soldier was drawn away from useful work, and was apt to get out of hand. "Supporting an army is maintaining so many idle persons to lord it over the rest of the subjects." These are arguments that we might hear to-day at the Peace Society, or the Social Democratic Federation. But the opponents of James went further. They knew that a standing army officered by Papists might be used, as the King certainly intended to use it, to crush out, not only their liberties, but their religion. The danger was more apparent than real, for the soldiers proved as ready as any one to sing "Lillibullero" and cheer the Seven Bishops, and they were prepared to pile their arms rather than become the tools of Popish lawlessness.

How James proceeded, with mulish obstinacy, to violate one after another all the dearest prejudices of his subjects, is well known. Divine right was submitted to an unbearable strain when it plainly involved the ruin and enslavement of the country. The last straw was the knowledge that the aboriginal Irish, a hated and despised race, were to be brought over to hold down their masters, the English Protestants. The fear and wrath of the nation found vent in the song which, as its author boasted, sang James out of England; "Lillibullero" had been the cry of the native Irish during the last massacre of the Protestants, and the song purports to be addressed by one Irishman to another:

> "Now de heretics all go down,
> By Chrish and St. Patrick, de land's our own!"

To cut the knot, thus tied, by foreign intervention, was a desperate expedient, and yet it is hard to see what else could have been done. It is strange to think that any Englishman can look back with pride upon what is perhaps the most inglorious revolution ever known. A foreign army marching across England to London; the English troops shamefully betrayed by their own leaders; treachery rampant everywhere, and culminating in the supreme baseness of Churchill; the unnatural conduct of Anne; the cowardice and nervous breakdown of the King himself, present a prospect, which few of us can regard without a blush for our countrymen. Nor is there the same passionate devotion to a cause that ennobles the Puritan revolution. What really happened was that the English Government was changed from a limited monarchy to an almost absolute oligarchy, though the completion of this process was delayed for a generation. The only ennobling and thoroughly satisfactory result was that England was at last able to take her proper place, as the mainstay of the coalition against Louis. But the national spirit was still in need of rousing, and it is not

pleasant to reflect that Englishmen could find relief for their feelings, by rejoicing over the weakness of our arms, in such doggerel as :

" And Berwick, how shall thy dear joys
Resist this famed viaggio ?
Thy tallest sparks will be mere toys
To Brandenburg and Swedish boys,
Coragio ! coragio ! "

There is, at least, this to be said, that it is doubtful whether any other political arrangement would have produced a better result. The country was sick from lack of faith, never had the moral standard of her public men been so low. It is not likely that princes like James II and his brother would have used their power to remedy social injustice, nor, had a regency of the little Prince been adopted as a solution, would the descent to oligarchy have been in any way checked. Perhaps in default of any respectable native government, it was better to get a competent foreigner to superintend the business. But if, on these grounds, we condone the revolution as a necessity, let us at least refrain from the hypocrisy of characterizing it as glorious.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STRUGGLE WITH LOUIS XIV

STRANGE it is that so many historians have pitched upon the Revolution as a proper subject for national or democratic congratulation. As typical of the kind of statement that passes almost without challenge, we may quote from the most distinguished of our economic historians: "The basis on which the whole polity rested was completely altered. The personal rule of the Crown gave place to the power of the people. . . ." A more burlesque travesty of the facts could hardly be conceived, and yet this is hardly an exaggeration of the view generally accepted, not only by the average man, but by historians themselves. It is a striking example of the modern fetish-worship of representative institutions, and the consequent mistaking of words for things.

The power of the people has always been a thing to reckon with in English history. Even the Red King had been fain to avail himself of its support; it had been the strength of Becket. It was by their instinctive sympathy with the mass of their subjects that the Tudors had been able to accomplish their task of nation-building, and Elizabeth spoke the literal truth when she told the Spanish ambassador that she owed her crown to her people. More representative of the national will was she than the most triumphantly elected of modern Governments. Neither the polling-booth nor the caucus is a

necessary go-between for the people and the ruler of its choice.

In what respect can the power of the people be said to have been strengthened by the Revolution? It is true that a blow was struck at the divine right of kings, but even this is gravely exaggerated. It is probable that if Anne had been as capable a ruler as Charles II, she might have wielded an equal measure of power. As it was, she was able to mould the complexion of her Parliaments almost to her will, and the most violent popular agitation of her reign was directly favourable to divine right. It was the accession of German George, and not that of Dutch William, which struck the decisive blow at the cause of monarchy.

Whatever may have been the power of the people, it is certain that, after the Restoration, the will of the people was biassed, to a large extent, towards the power of kings. Had Shaftesbury and his faction been supported by the nation, the panic of Oxford would never have taken place, nor would Charles have been able to re-establish his power, with hardly a murmur of protest, on a firmer basis than before. In truth, the Merry Monarch had to be careful that he did not place himself in too pronounced opposition to the wishes of his subjects; his scheme for re-establishing the Catholic Church was abandoned almost as soon as it was taken up, and he bowed wisely before the scare of the Popish Plot. As it was, that scare came within an ace of dethroning him. Locke himself has pointed out how feeble a safeguard is divine right against popular discontent. "When people are made miserable," says the Whig philosopher, "and find themselves exposed to arbitrary power, cry up their governors as much as you will for sons of Jupiter, let them be sacred and divine, descended or authorized from Heaven; give them out for whom or what you please, the same will happen."

We must then rid our minds of the prejudice that kings

are necessarily less representative of the popular will than Parliaments and their creatures, and confine ourselves to the practical question as to the effects of the Revolution. The most important of these was that in place of a monarch whom the nation was naturally prepared to love and obey, it got a foreigner who was necessary indeed, but an object of dislike and suspicion. The later Stuarts were as French as William was Dutch, but the nation did not realize this, and persisted in regarding them as English kings. It was only when they became impossible that the Dutchman was called in, and that not as a matter of choice, but of necessity. It was under these circumstances that Parliament came to assume an even greater importance than before. It was at least English, and made some pretence of being representative.

But to talk of Parliament as embodying the power of the people is either the vaguest rhetoric or demonstrably absurd. One step, more important than the Bill of Rights itself, was indeed taken towards making it responsible to its constituents, in the Triennial Act. At the same time flagrant tampering with elections, on the part of the Crown, was discontinued for more than half a century. But though the mass of the nation was never wholly without power, it was not of them that Parliament was primarily representative. It was essentially the organ of an oligarchy, in which the lower orders hardly found a voice, and whose exclusive tendency was only strengthened as time went on. The main line of cleavage is not between haves and have nots, nor between the forces of order and progress, but between the moneyed and the landed interests.

There is a sense in which it would hardly be unfair to date from the Revolution, not the power, but the enslavement of the people. As far as the average citizen was concerned, there was less freedom at the end of the

eighteenth century than at its beginning. At the accession of William, both in the industrial and agricultural spheres, there was wide scope for the individual. The Enclosure Acts had hardly commenced, and though the system of cultivation in common fields may have been wasteful and obsolete, it was consistent with a fair amount of personal and communal liberty. The yeomanry, though a diminishing class, were still numerous, and these small, independent farmers were a bulwark against the encroachments of the gentry—in the Civil War they had been Roundheads almost to a man. Industry was, for the most part, organized on the domestic system, so that the worker and his family could make up their products in their own homes, in blissful ignorance of foreman and factory bell. Even in towns like Sheffield and Halifax, the life of the worker was enviable compared with that of his modern successor. Town and country were not, as yet, sharply differentiated, and the workman would have his own garden and patch of land, so that he was not wholly dependent upon his employment, nor so specialized as to have but one interest in life. Above all, the concentration of the means of production in the hands of a small minority of the population was a feature of the modern industrial system, which then only existed in embryo.

It would be manifestly unjust to throw the blame of these tendencies upon the statesmen or principles of the Revolution. Forces, of which they had faint conception, had been working for many years to produce a change in the social system. Already, in Tudor times, had been heard the bitter cry of the dispossessed cottager, and the denunciation of the big capitalist. The factory system was at least as old as Jack of Newbury, and it already existed in several parts of England. The Sir Roger Mostyn, that brave, ruined Cavalier, to whom we have already referred, found a means of retrieving his fortunes,

and ending his days as prosperously as Job himself, by putting improved machinery into the tin mines on his estate, and working them for all they were worth. "The trend towards capitalism," says Dr. Cunningham, "had already been exemplified in the planting of new industries under Elizabeth; it seems to be probable that both the drapery and cotton manufacture were organized from their first introduction to this country by employers."

There was another, and more obscure influence, forcing the destinies of England into commercial channels. The Jews had long ago begun to migrate northwards. By the end of the sixteenth century they had been expelled from Spain, Venice, Naples and the commercial cities of Germany. Wherever they went, whether or no we are to trace a direct sequence of cause and effect, went commerce. "They are," says Addison, "so disseminated through all the trading parts of the world, that they are become the instruments whereby the most distant nations converse with one another, and by which mankind are knit together in a general correspondence." At Amsterdam, in the heyday of Dutch prosperity, there was a powerful Jewish community, with whom the exiled Prince Charles was fain to do business. Largely owing to the influence of that loyal and mystic Jew, Manasseh ben Israel, the Protector was induced to remove the ban which had exiled the Chosen People from our shores. They migrated to our shores in considerable numbers; in spite of formal prohibitions they soon managed to push themselves into prominence in the financial world. One German historian has actually gone so far as to maintain that the bulk of our foreign and colonial trade passed for a while under Jewish control, but be this as it may, we may at least feel ourselves justified in ascribing to this source some part of the commercial tendency of the new age. Tories of the old school saw with alarm, as we learn from one of their pamphlets during Anne's reign, the results of the war

enriching only " a parcel of Jews, of Dutch, French and English stockjobbers." Money, to alter slightly Emerson's words, was in the saddle, and rode mankind.

Another order of things was, in fact, beginning. Ever since the Restoration, thought had been slipping more and more into materialist grooves, and the old religious enthusiasms were replaced by motives of a different stamp. Even Scotland, which fifty years before had been white-hot for the Covenant, was fired again by such a strange gospel as that of Projector Paterson and his Darien Company. The patient and dauntless William found himself forced to lean for support upon the little group of rich men who formed the Bank of England. It was even more the fear of the fundholder than that of the Protestant which kept James II at Saint-Germain. The very squires sought to neutralize the new moneyed interest by starting a bank of their own, on the security of land—a hopeless project. A new kind of gentleman—so Johnson was to describe the merchant—was already creeping, and intruding, and climbing into the pale. Defoe noted, on his tour, how many of the gentry in the western shires had come by their fortunes in the clothing trade. In " Diamond " Pitt, the father of the great statesman, we see how rapidly a fortune might be built up by the pushing " interloper," and how this might prove a golden pathway even to a seat in Parliament.

Tendencies, which were remoulding the whole social fabric, not in the direction of liberty, were doubtless not to be reversed by laws and Parliaments. But it was conceivable that their harshness might have been mitigated, and they themselves turned into manifold and propitious courses, had the power of the people been really effective. But the reverse of this was the case. Parliament was made up of, and in great part represented, those very classes who stood to gain most out of the change. They were gentlemen, men of means, and after

the reign of Anne they were required by law to be landed gentlemen. If the Tory squire and the Whig fundholder differed in every other respect, they were naturally united in the interest of their class as against that of the lower orders. It would be hard to discover, in the century following the Revolution, one notable instance of democratic legislation, but it would be easy to cite a score of the opposite tendency.

In fact there was being perfected one of the most thorough and minute systems of class ascendancy known in history. Nothing worse had obtained under the crudest tyranny of the feudal lord. The cornerstone of the whole edifice was not so much Parliament, as the Justice of the Peace. In the hands of a small nominated committee of local magnates was placed practically the whole administration and petty justice of each shire. Woe to the man who set his will in opposition to that of a magistrate! We know, from Richardson, that even the honour of an innocent girl was hardly worth a week's purchase, if her would-be seducer was also on the bench of justices. How little the liberty of the individual was regarded may be gauged by Voltaire's story of the man who told him one day that he would rather be a boatman on the Thames than an archbishop in France, and the next day was discovered in irons, begging alms, because he had been seized by the press-gang. Readers of "Tom Jones" will remember how that hero just escaped being sent to sea as a common sailor, because he happened to be the rival in love of my Lord Fellamar.

The Church of England, which had often, in time past, been the bulwark of the poor against the rich, had now come into line with Dives. She had apparently emerged victorious from her struggle with Dissent, but the ideal of Laud had vanished. There was no longer the least danger of the Church reproving the rich man of sin, nor was any Archbishop of Canterbury likely again to take

up the cause of Naboth against his King. The old power of the Church, which was spiritual, had ceased to exist; and the connection between Church and religion was almost entirely formal. Of faith and enthusiasm there was little indeed. And it was but natural that the parson, having ceased to be the spiritual father of his parish, should lose his power, and sink into a position of subservience to the squire. The eighteenth-century parson, from the glimpses we catch of him, seems to have been a good fellow on the whole; sometimes a kindly and learned gentleman; more often a hard-riding sportsman, with a fondness for his bottle and bodily comfort generally, but with no more idea of taking up his cross, or being born again into the life of Christ, than he had of flying. That such a man would do anything except swim with the stream is not to be believed. This is the age of the Vicar of Bray.

It would be the height of absurdity to speak as if there were any deep-laid or cynical conspiracy on the part of the upper class against their inferiors, or anything at all equivalent to the nobbling of the corporations by Charles II. If there was tyranny, it must be granted that it was little understood, or even realized by its victims. On the contrary, the Englishman, like Voltaire's boatman, was never tired of contrasting his own freedom and prosperity with the hard lot of foreign slaves, and particularly Frenchmen. "Popery and wooden shoes" had been bracketed together by the London mob, who believed Oates. Nor was this prejudice altogether devoid of foundation. Voltaire was struck by the material prosperity of the English peasant as compared with his French compeer; by his ability to improve his small property without being bled to death for it, and by the number of prosperous English farmers. Such comparisons were to be a favourite theme for the pictorial satire of Hogarth.

In many respects the English upper class seems to have

been more worthy of respect than that of any other nation. If they had power, they at least worked for it. They lived, for the most part, on their estates, and understood, and were understood by, their dependents. Sir Roger de Coverley represents a type inconceivable in any land less fortunate than our own. A Squire Western may have been ignorant and brutal, but the hearty old fellow, with his farmer's accent and prejudices, and more than a farmer's eye for the run of a fox, was, beyond all comparison, a more popular and efficient kind of land-owner than the magnificent Marquis de Carabas, who only saw, or was allowed to see, his estate at very rare intervals, and who regarded it principally as a means of extorting money for his pleasures at Versailles. Moreover, unjust and pedantic as English Law might be, there was a majesty about it, something of the spirit of old Coke, which prevented it from being formally or cynically regardless of justice. This was, in part, the result of that provision of the Act of Settlement which removed the judges from the influence of the Crown. When, at the very worst period of class ascendancy, Lord Ferrers was so bold as to murder his servant, not all the influence of his title and connections could keep him from the gallows, nor from the added shame of being dissected afterwards, like any cutpurse or highwayman. There were, in England, none of those flagrant exemptions from taxation on the part of the well-to-do, which played such a part in bringing about the French Revolution.

If our Revolution did nothing, of itself, to strengthen the power of the people, there were still means through which that power could find expression, though crudely, and at intervals. It so happened that London, which was the centre of government, was also the most turbulent, and politically active part of the kingdom. It was a masterpiece of tactics for Charles II to have arranged for his political *coup d'état* at Oxford, and not at London.

The London mob was still able to strike terror into a Government, which could not, or dared not, as yet, call out the troops to shoot them down. When, by a reversal of their traditional bias, they shouted for the Church and Sacheverell, their hoarse roar penetrated the fastness of the Upper Chamber and paralysed the judges. It was a wave of popular feeling upon which William relied, at the end of his reign, to return him a majority favourable to the war, and his confidence was not misplaced. This sensitiveness of the rulers to the popular mood did not increase, to say the least of it, during the eighteenth century, except when quickened by the genius of Chatham. It was possible for Pitt the younger, and Liverpool, to set popular opinion at defiance in a way that would have been impossible for William, or even Walpole.

It is no less significant than interesting to examine the theory by which its apologists sought to justify the Revolution. The task devolved upon Locke, who was, by general consent, the Whig philosopher *par excellence*. The hesitating and inconsistent nature of his philosophy we shall have occasion to notice hereafter, merely remarking here that it is in keeping with his politics. Like the statesman who brought over William, he was, above all things, an advocate of compromise. Few treatises are less inspiring than his "Discourse on Civil Government," and yet it is worth noticing that, as Spinoza's dry and Euclidean ethics were the delight of the young Goethe, so this unemotional pamphlet was capable of awakening enthusiasm in the breast of Chatham.

Locke proceeds to construct his State upon the same lines as Hobbes. What he does is, in effect, to take his predecessor's theory, and see how, by patching and alteration, it can be made to suit the purposes of the Whigs and William III. His natural man is a more respectable person than Hobbes' graceless free-lance. He is blessed with a sense of *meum* and *tuum*, and bears

the Law of Nature written in his breast. But he finds that it will be more convenient, on the whole, for him to enter into some sort of definite association with his neighbours, and that for certain specified reasons. "The great and chief end," says Locke, "of men uniting in commonwealths . . . is the preservation of their property." This is in the true spirit of an age in which commerce was to draw policy in its train, and in which the law, though it might be merciful to violence, avenged with deadly severity the theft of a sheep or the firing of a rick.

The natural man, therefore, consents to the formation of a society wielding executive, legislative, and judicial powers, nicely divided and balanced. However, there may come a point at which the inconveniences of such a contract outweigh its benefits, and hence arises the right of resistance. It may be observed that there is nothing in all this calling for more sentiment than does the formation of any business partnership. Locke's dry reasoning does not admit of patriotic enthusiasm, or pride of history, still less of any mystic sanction from above. Our author displays no slight controversial shrewdness in devoting the first part of his Discourse to a dissection of Filmer's silly apology for Divine Right. Indeed, Filmer understood as little as Locke, the depth and import of a reverence which was only weakened by narrowing it to the person of a king. That was for Burke to discover anew.

There appears in Locke a new trend of thought, of which we shall hear much during the Prose Age. The natural love of the Motherland was put into competition with a theoretical attachment to the world at large. Cosmopolitan doctrines have ever been of the head rather than of the heart, and humanity in the abstract is a thing that most men would sooner discuss than die for. In almost his only passage, which is at all tinged with emotion,

Locke states that the end of government is the good of mankind.

Such was the philosophy of the Revolution; a cold, material, balanced piece of reasoning, ominous of the years to come. It was little merit in such an evangelist that he was an upholder of Toleration, for he could ill have understood the motives which drove men like St. Bernard to persecute, or men like Cromwell to forbear. Much less respectable than the philosopher of the Revolution were its statesmen. Trained in the school of the Restoration, they had, for the most part, such liberal views of morality that they did not stick at corresponding with William under James, and with James under William. The best of them were men like Somers, cautious, trimming tacticians, fertile in expedients, but with a real fund of patriotism. Such men were the exceptions, and a diminishing minority. More characteristic of the time is the essentially modern type of Harley and Godolphin, the man acquainted with every shift and turn of the party game, capable of infinite non-committal, and labouring with unwearied diligence for his own advancement, not from any lust to control the destinies of men, but because office and titles are comfortable things to have.

Hardly had William been seated on the throne, than the nation found itself faced by a crisis, which called out all that was noblest in it. To call over William of Orange was, indeed, equivalent to committing England to the struggle with Louis. Of this struggle William was the embodiment; to this cause his life was devoted. Perhaps we might even go a step further, and say that in this cause he had sacrificed his soul. There is something inhuman about him; if he is among the most admirable, he is also among the least amiable of mankind. He had drilled himself almost into a machine, fit to crush his gigantic adversary. To ordinary human morality he

was indifferent, when it was a question of advancing the cause; he did not punish the murder of the De Witts; he winked at the massacre of Glencoe. While he was unfettered by scruples, he was also devoid of inspiration. Sudden and dazzling coups were not his way in the council chamber, or the field. He was a poor general, and no match for such an opponent as Luxemburg. He was the embodiment of the Dutch genius, patient, unyielding and capable of infinite attention to detail; not in vain did he bear the Orange motto "Je maintiendrai." It was fitting that the hardest and most thankless part of the task should have fallen to him, that he should not have lived to see the fruit of his labours, but passed away when it might well have seemed that all was lost. Such men as he do not work for reward; it was enough that in face of almost incredible odds, he should still have maintained his cause, and that history should confer upon him the unquestionable title of "Saviour of Europe."

The key of the situation, as William well knew, was England. The English people were as ready as his own Dutchmen to bear arms against the French, but they had too long been muzzled by their kings. While a Stuart was upon the English throne, Louis had the advantage of Europe, and all that William and his allies could do was to oppose a dogged resistance to those splendid armies. The accession of England to the alliance might tilt the scale in an opposite direction. It was for this reason, and not for any love of our country, or sympathy with our wrongs, that William came over to govern us. England was a piece in his game, a reinforcement for his European army. It was the consciousness of this fact that made his subjects turn upon him with such churlish ingratitude.

The soul of England, terrible when roused, has often required strong measures, *peine forte et dure*, to awaken it from sleep. This was especially needful at a period when

treachery was rather the rule than the exception among our leaders, and when we had been so little capable of working out our own salvation, that we had had to call in Dutchmen and Brandenburgers to accomplish it for us. But now, as was so often the case, the people were greater of heart than their rulers, and only required a strong lead to prove their worth in the sight of Europe. But for that a season of apprenticeship was needed, and William was just the man to supply the necessary instruction. Even more compelling than her King's leadership was the enmity of Louis. The nation required at least a glimpse of ruin before it could become fit to achieve victory.

Miserable and inefficient were our resources when the full blast of Louis' wrath was turned upon England. Thirty years before, our troops had excited the wonder of Turenne, now, during our first campaign of the Boyne, it was the foreigners of his cosmopolitan army upon whom their leader had to place his reliance. Of the troops who had frightened England upon Hounslow Heath, many a man was incapable of using his musket, and had he been an expert marksman, it would often have availed him little, as many of the muskets were unfit for use. But even in this Irish campaign, especially in its later stages, our men had begun to give proof of that invincible valour which was to prove them more than a match for the household troops of France.

In the opening stage of the war, the situation became frightfully perilous, almost comparable to that which obtained a century later during the mutiny of the Nore. Catholic Ireland was up in arms for James, the Marquis de Humières lay with thirty thousand men almost in sight of our shores, and, worst of all, the fleet was beaten in the Channel. The Battle of Beachy Head is one of those incidents upon which the judgment of history is less decided than that of contemporaries. The unfor-

tunate admiral, whose conduct has up to recent years been the object of universal execration, is now considered by many, competent to judge, to have played the part of a gallant man and good seaman, and to have deserved well of his country. He was forced, against his better judgment, and by men who entertained no friendly sentiments towards him, to fight a desperate action with a fleet which far outnumbered his own, and was, besides, the fleet of one nation. The attempt was a desperate one from the beginning, and Torrington must have seen early in the action, that with his ships divided and outnumbered at every point, and his van between two fires, he had no chance of success. A fearful responsibility rested upon his shoulders. Behind Tourville was Humières, and ready to join Humières, for anything the admiral knew, were all the Jacobites in England. The prospect of invasion was appalling. Perhaps the one chance of safety was for Torrington to draw off his fleet in good order, and keep it in being, on Tourville's flank. This was what he did, and the most decisive justification of his policy was, that Tourville utterly failed to improve his victory, and no French army set foot on our shores.

But this was hardly dreamed of, until more than two centuries after the event. The verdict of his countrymen was decisive and unanimous, as regarded the Battle of Beachy Head. England had not only been defeated, but disgraced; our admiral had been guilty of a baseness worthy of David, in placing our allies in the forefront of the battle. "I cannot conclude," said William to his Parliament that autumn, "without taking notice also how much the honour of the nation has been exposed by the ill-conduct of my fleet, in the last summer's engagement against the French." It was lucky for Torrington that confinement in the Tower protected him from the fury of the mob. Afterwards, it is true, there was a reaction in his favour, when it was found that he

was likely to be sacrificed to the vengeance of an unpopular ally. He was acquitted by the court martial; but he was a broken man, dismissed from the King's service, and coldly regarded by his fellow-peers. The country was alarmed, in earnest. Dreadful visions of the threatened invasion were in every one's mind. One pamphlet vividly depicts the horrors of conquest by a French army, by ruffians who had blackened the fair cities and vineyards of the Rhine, and who had found pleasure in torturing inoffensive Huguenots. Such a fate was what every English man and woman had to expect, if once an army of French veterans landed on our shores. Moreover, the return of James meant popery, and vassalage to France. Well may we understand how the country was aroused from shore to shore. Tourville held the Channel.

Another pamphlet points to an old moral, but one which Englishmen, after their recent humiliation, were slow to draw. Our interests were bound up with those of Holland, and the two nations were the mainstay of the Protestant cause in Europe. In yet another pamphlet, it is urged that even supposing Louis to desire William's overthrow out of disinterested friendship for James (a large assumption), his success would be the means of removing the only formidable opponent of a French universal monarchy. Such were some of the voices of this most perilous hour. The nation was thoroughly shaken out of its apathy. Hardly a man but was ready to fly to arms, even though the best he could obtain was some poor scythe or pitchfork. The very Jacobites were shamed out of their divided allegiance, by the peril of their country, and it was dangerous for any one suspected of disloyalty to show his face. The Dutch peril and the fear of military domination were, for a while, suffered to sleep. England had found her soul.

The worst fears were soon quieted. Louis had missed his opportunity, and time was on our side. Next year it

was Tourville's turn to be outnumbered, and forced, like Torrington, to make a fight. This he did with a bravery that his master was generous enough to honour with a baton, but the result was a decisive victory for the allies. The engagement itself threw no dazzling glory upon our arms, but the subsequent burning of the French ships under the eyes of James was an exploit worthy of Drake, or Nelson. The poor King must have realized that in those leaping flames, that illumined the sea and threw into grim relief the black forms of the English boats, perished his last hope of coming to his own again.

The tide had now turned. The fording of Boyne Water had been decisive of the fate of Ireland, and the command of the sea had passed into the hands of England, beyond hope of recovery by Louis. And now Britannia did indeed rule the waves, for the naval power of our ally was soon to become as insignificant as that of our enemy. The Dutch were not conquered, they simply dropped out of the race. What our enmity, in three desperate struggles, had been unable to accomplish, was done peaceably by our alliance. The spirit of distrust with which Englishmen regarded the army, was not extended to the fleet. No one feared that the tars would use their cutlasses on a London mob, nor that the country would be held down by the tyranny of a dictator's rear-admirals. Members of Parliament vied with each other in their devotion to the navy. "I believe we are all unanimous," says Colonel Austin shortly after the Battle of Beachy Head, "that a fleet is necessary." Sir Thomas Clarges follows with "None in this House but think a good fleet necessary." "Everybody," says a third speaker, Sir Christopher Musgrave, "is for having a fleet." Halifax, trimmer as he was, did not trim at all upon this vital question, but was as strong as Themistocles for the wooden walls of his country.

The Battle of La Hogue marks the turning of the tide. Louis had sustained an unmistakable and crushing reverse, his fleets were no longer able to hold the sea, Colbert's trade policy had received its deathblow. From this point, the French King is fighting a losing battle. The ten years' war that was now in progress, though bloody and obstinate, was one in which neither side seemed able to make any progress. March and countermarch, battle and siege, ruin and starvation, produced but scanty visible results. And yet, even while the Te Deum was sounding for the latest victory of Luxemburg, France was being bled to death. To this end our command of the sea helped to contribute, especially when our fleets entered the Mediterranean, and established our supremacy there for a couple of years. There was still much inefficiency, and lack of discipline, among our fleets, and there were still regrettable incidents, but when the war ended, French commerce was ruined, and the French navy had practically ceased to exist.

Meanwhile the patient, unswerving man, who was the soul of the Grand Alliance, was pursuing his thankless task in Germany, and British troops were fighting among the allies. Though they were but a minority of William's army, they soon proved themselves to be its most valuable element. If Torrington had failed to support the Dutch off Beachy Head, the Dutch returned the compliment at Steenkirk. "Damn the English," said Count Solmes, "if they are so fond of fighting, let them have a bellyful." At Landen our men again accomplished wonders in a hopeless position of William's choosing; even the household troops of France, invincible hitherto, recoiled before them, and only the superior numbers, and iron will of Luxemburg, succeeded in snatching a victory. These reverses were galling for people at home, who saw the blood and treasure of the country poured out upon the plains of Flanders, without a gleam of success. One

ballad of 1694 recounts, with bitter sarcasm, our various disasters :

> " Here our poor English go to pot,
> Because forsooth it is their lot
> To undergo all service hot."

A not unnatural comment on Steenkirk.

But the gloom was destined to be turned to joy, and William to come to the zenith of his career, with the fall of Namur. The delight of the nation was unbounded. A great fortress, commanded by a Marshal of France, had been retaken, and it was our Grenadiers who had mounted to the decisive assault. It is from this feat that the Grenadiers' March takes its origin. To celebrate the French capture of Namur, three years before, Boileau had written a pompous and boastful panegyric. It was now the turn of our side, and Prior availed himself of the opportunity by writing a parody in which the unfortunate ode is held up, line by line, to ridicule.

The Court poems written to celebrate William's glories may naturally be held of small account, since they are obviously inspired by no very lofty emotion. But they show what was the kind of thing best calculated to please the King, and we find him represented in the light not only of a great conqueror, but of the deliverer of Europe. Montague, afterwards Earl Halifax, sang, in reference to the Boyne, how William's patriotic spirit, which first burned in the cause of his own country, had now expanded to embrace the interests of all Europe. If only such a victory had been won by the lawless, ambitious King of France, with what a chorus of adulation would it not have been celebrated ! Perhaps, the only thing of enduring value among these compositions is the noble and touching verse of Prior, written after the death of Queen Mary :

> " Embattled princes wait the chief
> Whose voice should rule, whose arm should lead,
> And in kind murmurs chide that grief
> That hinders Europe being freed."

And Hughes, in an extraordinary poem, in which William is brought back from Holland by various classical deities, says :

> " Not Belgia, not the rescued isle alone,
> But Europe shall her great deliverer own."

It is to be observed that this European enthusiasm was a thing entirely different from, and indeed opposite to, Locke's interest in mankind. It was just because the nations of Europe were fighting, shoulder to shoulder, against the tyranny of one of their own number, that it was possible to feel for Europe something akin to patriotism.

But not even the capture of Namur could give William the affections of his English subjects. It was the tragedy of his life that the people, whom he rescued from tyranny and dishonour, should never have been able either to trust or love him. It was impossible that they should have done so. William was not an Englishman, and he did not love the English. His letters to his friend, Heinsius, are full of his impatience and lack of sympathy with his subjects. Our statesmen he had too good reasons to distrust, and he even went to the length of warning the Imperial Ambassador against confiding in them. For his own part, he was not a man who could have attracted Englishmen. He was neither good-humoured nor gracious, and he had that cold and impenetrable reserve which has ever been repellent to our disposition. He was suspected, with good cause, of being indifferent to our national interests. To say that his policy was wholly Dutch would be wrong, for though he loved Holland as his own country, he did not scruple to force the Dutch into an English alliance, and that on very disadvantageous terms. He had so devoted himself to his life's task that he was really, in some sense, a European statesman.

But what was most resented by Englishmen was the favour openly shown by the King to his own country-

men." Patriots saw, with unspeakable disgust, their King going to open Parliament between blue lines of Dutch guards. Titles and lands were conferred on foreigners, by a monarch who evidently delighted to honour them more than Englishmen. The prejudice against the Dutch was still alive, and only intensified by such spectacles. Hence it is easy to imagine the applause with which his countrymen greeted a speech of Sir John Knight, member for Bristol, denouncing in the roundest terms a Bill for naturalizing Protestant aliens. "There is no entering the Courts of St. James's and Whitehall," Knight made so bold as to say, "the palaces of our hereditary kings, for the great noise and croaking of the Froglanders." "Let us kick the Bill out of the House," he concluded, "and the foreigners out of the kingdom!" The speech was printed and dispersed, and forthwith obtained a popularity beyond the expectations of its author. It was believed that, if the Bill took effect, all the high offices of the State would be filled by Dutchmen, who would prescribe what form of Church or State they would. Knight was adored as the saviour of his country, and though fear of Whig vengeance caused him to disown his speech in the House, and though the speech itself was burnt by the common hangman, this only served to enhance his popularity in the country; "the speech, whether genuine or not, was more regarded, and the cry against the Bill became louder than ever: in vain the scribes of the Court party were employed to justify the one and explode the other: the torrent continued to rage as violently as before, and, for the present, it was thought advisable to suffer the Bill to be carried away by it."

Thus the Tories, and even the Jacobites, could make a plausible claim to being on the patriotic side, especially when Mary died, and William was left to rule alone. One pamphlet dwells upon the insignificant and humili-

ating part we were playing in the war. There was but a sprinkling of redcoats in the allied army, yet redcoats were steadily draining the resources of the land. In the last two reigns our trade had prospered, but now, to aggravate the enormous burden of the war, French privateers were doing untold damage to our shipping. Free-born Englishmen were haled beyond the seas to fight in a foreign quarrel; foreign troops were quartered in England. Our prestige was gone. Indeed, what could be expected from men who had forsaken their true liege for a Dutch conqueror? Thus argued the patriot Jacobite.

Equally bitter is another tract which purports to give a true account of the state of England under the Dutch. Our rivals have become our masters. Even Cromwell, regicide as he was, at least minded our interests, and humbled the Dutch. All that these aliens care about is their trade, and it is all to their advantage that England is reduced to this state of unprecedented misery, though the tract ominously proceeds, "our English breed are very skittish," as the Dutchman may perhaps find out some day. Furthermore our military resources are wasted, and our troops sent abroad to be treated, and die, like dogs. Such are the results of a foreign prince's rule, and of the just wrath of Almighty God against an ungrateful and rebellious people.

These tracts called forth a ready response from the supporters of William. They flatly denied that trade had fallen off, and carried the charges of oppression into the enemy's country, by recalling the tyranny of James. Either James and Louis will have to change their character, they say, or else a Restoration means those two inseparably connected ills, popery and slavery.

A most unpleasant rejoinder to the extreme nationalism of the Tories is Defoe's satire, the "True-born Englishman." The Whig pamphleteer could think of no better apology for William's rule, than to blackguard un-

mercifully his own fellow-countrymen. The English race was so mongrel as not even to be able to trace its own origin. Pict and Briton, Saxon and Dane, Norman and Frenchman, Fleming and Walloon, Scot and Irishman, had all gone to the making of the " True-born Englishman."

> " These are the heroes who despise the Dutch,
> And rail at new-come foreigners so much ;
> Forgetting that themselves are all derived
> From the most scoundrel race that ever lived."

Nothing is too venomous for Defoe to set down in this extraordinary pamphlet. More than any anti-Dutch squib, is this unnatural invective calculated to make us revise the traditional estimate, that would regard William's supporters as the only patriots, and their opponents as an insincere and treasonable faction. Certainly neither side could lay claim to any monopoly, or stainlessness of patriotism.

It was after the Peace of Ryswick that the grievances of the nation came to a head. The tension of the war was relaxed, and Englishmen had leisure to concentrate their attention upon their own affairs. Creditably as we had acquitted ourselves in the struggle, there was no visible cause for enthusiasm about the result. Louis had been held in check, but his power was intact. How hard he had been hit, how attenuated were his resources, was hidden from the ordinary man ; to all appearances we had been squandering our strength, at the bidding of a foreigner, for no particular result. Meanwhile, the consequences at home were most alarming. England had congratulated herself upon the Restoration, on having rid herself once and for all of standing armies, and now an immense force, according to the standard of the times, stronger than the New Model, was being maintained at our expense. To make things worse, foreign troops were actually quartered in England, and such men were not likely to be tender with our liberties. A system of finance, not

English but Dutch, had saddled us with a formidable debt, for the usury of which the taxpayers were to be bled yearly. And the good things of the State were notoriously being lavished on foreigners.

The most acute grievance of all was that of a standing army, and it was round this point that controversy raged most fiercely. All sorts of arguments, often claiming the support of antiquity, were put forward to show that raw English militiamen were a fit match for the veterans of Boufflers and Villeroy. On the other hand, men with a grasp of military realities pointed out how fearful was the danger we incurred, in casting away means of defence in the face of such an army as Louis's. This fear is vividly expressed in a pamphlet written by a gentleman of Kent. Louis was maintaining in full commission an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, and invasion was a terribly easy affair. The author himself would undertake to land twenty thousand foot, and two thousand dragoons, on any part of the Kent or Sussex coast. The Dutch have their own homes to defend, and cannot help us defend ours. A handful of regulars, and such militia as can be got together, will be helpless to stem the tide of invasion, and England will be exposed to all the unspeakable horrors of French conquest.

Prior speaks out with fine scorn :

> " Would they directly break the sword
> With which their freedom was secured,
> And trust themselves to Lewis's word ?
> This is the time.
>
> " Would they leave England unprotected,
> To show how well they are affected,
> And get themselves next bout elected ?
> This is the time."

There is an alternative solution put forward in an essay by Stepney, which is remarkable not only for its temperate reasoning, but also for its anticipation of modern problems. He is an advocate of universal service on a militia

basis. He does not wish to appear as an upholder of a standing army, nor is he simple enough to trust in undisciplined levies. He believes that the people themselves ought to be personally responsible for their own defence. If the nobles and gentry would only forego a few of their pleasures, and devote themselves to learning military discipline and imparting it to others, their example would soon be followed, and it would be thought neither a hardship, nor in any way inconsistent with the liberty of the subject, if every young man were obliged to spend two or three years qualifying himself for the defence of his country. Lord Roberts would hardly put the case differently.

The most important contribution of all was the famous "balancing letter" of the Whig Minister Somers. It is beyond doubt the production of a scholar and a patriot, but it also betrays the man of office and party. Somers maintains the urgency of national defence in the strongest terms. He shows with what speed troops may be concentrated for an invasion, and how the accident of wind and tide may land them on our shores. He is under no illusion, either as an historian or a statesman, about the efficiency of militias, but he is alive to the real danger to liberty involved in the existence of a standing army. Thus he is wiser than his own, and perhaps a subsequent, generation, by recognizing that there is a choice of evils. But his own solution depends partly on a quibble, partly upon a failure to grasp what the problem really was. He denies that the standing army is really a standing army at all, because it depends upon Parliament, and stands in need of constant renewal by parliamentary sanction. This was to ignore the fact that the real danger to our liberties was to come from within the walls of Parliament itself.

In fact, the danger that men apprehended from standing armies was no mere prejudice or chimera, as is usually

held nowadays, but was actually justified by the event. We have seen that, in spite of Parliament, the people themselves retained a very considerable measure of power. Governments went in terror of the mob's anger. Walpole might persuade, or corrupt, members into taxing the breakfast table, but there were things the people would not stand, and they were still able to say, or bawl, to the Minister, " Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." This was because the Government had not yet ventured to call out the troops to fire on the mob. This was first done during the Wilkes riots, and in that whiff of musket-shot was blown away the most effective check on oligarchic license. Mob law is an ugly and brutal thing, but since Tudor times it had been one of the most effective checks against an unpopular Government. Under the regime of Eldonian Toryism, this safeguard no longer existed, because the troops could be depended upon to make short work of the angriest crowd. It is much the same grievance, to-day, that excites the indignation of trades unionists against the regular forces.

So that for good or evil, there was a real abridgment of liberty to be apprehended from a standing army. This was doubly so when the weapon was in the hands of a foreigner, and when foreign generals were capable of being promoted to high commands in England. It was no mere party question. The Tories certainly were solid for the reductions, but they were joined by a number of Whigs. The House of Commons then enjoyed a very large measure of independence, and it was impossible for Ministers to count on the votes of their own party. Our ancestors were genuinely alarmed for our liberties, and we must judge of their action leniently. Some at least of their measures were unquestionably wise. The Dutch guards and generals had to go back to Holland, despite the fact that William's mortification nearly induced him to resign the crown. The grants made to foreigners were

called in question. In such cases, considerations of personal sentiment cannot be allowed to weigh against the requirements of national policy.

The reduction of the army to seven thousand men was a more questionable expedient, though several additional thousands were kept under arms, by the simple device of calling soldiers marines. The poor fellows, who had fought so gallantly for us in Flanders, found themselves exposed on their return home to ingratitude and obloquy. Part of this undoubtedly sprang from the nervous civilian dread of martial violence, but less creditable motives were at work, faction and sheer meanness. Whatever the principles at stake, it was a shame to make scapegoats of men whose only crime had been the performance of their duty. Macaulay cites a passage from Farquhar's "Trip to the Jubilee," in which an ill-natured alderman, such a one as we have already met in Wycherley's "Plain Dealer," makes game of the grief of a gallant colonel, who has just seen his regiment disbanded. "I'll have a bonfire this night as high as the monument!" "A bonfire!" cries the colonel, "thou dry wretched ill-nature! Had not these brave fellows' swords defended you, your house had been a bonfire e'er this about your ears!"

William's reign draws to a close, amid contention and gloom. The Peace of Ryswick was obviously only a breathing space for Europe, before a yet more fearful struggle than that of the League of Augsburg. No one saw more clearly than William the shame that impended, upon the death of poor doddering Charles II of Spain. It was the part of a wise and public-spirited statesman to try, if it were possible, to avert the danger. Even Louis shrank from another such contest as that from which he had just emerged, and between them the two mortal enemies set to work, partitioning by treaty the vast and inert Empire of Spain. It was perhaps the most arduous task of William's troubled career, for even

if he could rely on the good faith of Louis, it was not likely that the Spanish nation, indomitably proud even amidst its decay, would submit to such treatment. William must have known that he was bluffing his opponent from a pitiably weak hand, if bluffing it can be called, when all the cards are on the table. His own army was being disbanded, and his Parliament was in open mutiny, at the very time when his opponent was concentrating all his still immense resources against the crisis. By his efforts to secure peace, he gave still further offence to the Opposition, and an impeachment was actually brought against Somers for his share in the Partition Treaties. The discontent was not unnatural. However much he had conceded to his Parliament in other respects, William had at least insisted on being his own master, as regarded foreign affairs, and his policy was not English but European. In the Partition Treaties there was little thought for English interests as such; France and Austria stood to profit in various degrees, but England was left out in the cold. This may have been wise, but when such an arrangement was made, in our name, by a Dutchman, it was only to be expected that Englishmen should complain of being left in the lurch.

In fact, the nation, as William and Louis both realized, was sick of war. It is not improbable that France would have been allowed to achieve the summit of her ambition, without the firing of one English musket, had it not been for the insensate and reckless pride of her monarch. Fresh Steenkirks and Landens, fresh taxation, more debt, were things that the nation dreaded even more than a Bourbon West of Europe. When Louis seized the barrier fortresses, for which so much of our blood had been spilt, the nation could still console itself with the reflection that these would be evacuated, sooner or later, in favour of his nephew. But Louis took a more dangerous step, when he insulted our honour by daring to recognize

the Pretender as King of England. William was quick to take advantage of this blunder. When patriotic resentment had risen to fever-heat, he dissolved the troublesome Tory Parliament, and obtained another almost as eager as himself to settle accounts with Louis. "Do you," he exhorted them in his last speech, "lay aside parties and divisions. Let there be no other distinction heard of amongst us for the future, but of those who are for the Protestant Religion, and the present establishment, and of those who mean a Popish prince and a French Government."

It was now time for him to depart; his life's work was done. He had brought the nation into line against Louis, and he had entrusted the conduct of the war to a captain far mightier than himself. The feeble body was needed no longer, and it took but a little shock to release the worn spirit within. England would fight better for an English Queen, one of whose first acts was to proclaim herself a whole-hearted Englishwoman. There was little gratitude for the dead King. One of the first acts of a new Parliament was to insult his memory, and to thank Marlborough, after his first campaign, for *retrieving* the glory of the British arms.

But now, at last, we were to reap the harvest sown by William. The days of indecisive campaigns, of weary marches and countermarches with little result, were over. We could put into the field an army of veterans, under a commander of transcendent genius. Victories as glorious as, and more decisive than Agincourt were inscribed upon our standards. The nightmare of French domination, which had brooded over Europe for a generation, passed away for a century. Over the military history of these years we cannot linger. It must not be forgotten, that the part played by the British in this war was hardly comparable to that which they were to take in the downfall of Napoleon. Even at Blenheim, Oudenarde and

Malplaquet they formed but a contingent, while at Ramillies their part in the actual fighting was but small. At the same time, it may fairly be maintained that their support was of decisive importance. When it was withdrawn, matters turned against the allies. A valour at once impetuous and invincible, rendered our contingent the flower of the combined army.

This is certainly to be attributed, in part, to the consummate ability of their leader. When our men found themselves under a Galway, they could get such a sound beating as Almanza. Marlborough is, and will remain, one of the most baffling of all characters. His early career is, to say the least of it, worthy the atmosphere of the Restoration Court. At the same time, the worst charge against him is not proven, for we have good reason for believing that the supposed betrayal of Talmash was not a betrayal at all, but a deliberate ruse, to which William himself was a party, for drawing off the French troops to Brest. His avarice, though certainly exaggerated by the bias of his enemies, is an unusual feature in the characters of great men, though Frederick the Great's might be cited as a parallel case. But the unwearied industry, which was the foundation of his genius; the tact and temper, which enabled him to hold together the incongruous and jarring company of his allies; his unruffled patience; the dignity which, as Lord Chesterfield told his son, made the slightest liberty towards him seem unthinkable; and the purity of his domestic relations, go far to redeem him, even as a man, in the eyes of posterity. Of his martial capacity it is almost impertinence to speak. In an age of military pedantry, which was to be followed by a pedantry even greater, he alone conceived of war upon the grand scale. Though a commander of infinite caution, he was bound by no rules except those dictated by the necessities of the situation. When, according to all precedent, he ought to have been on the Meuse, he

turned up on the Danube. Forced marches and night-marches were regular features of his strategy. He could adapt his tactics, even on the battlefield, to suit the exigencies of the situation, and that with lightning rapidity. Perhaps the greatest proof of his genius is that he was not frightened at the prospect of marching on Paris, even with the fortress of Lille and Marshal Boufflers in his rear, a piece of boldness that was too much for Eugene. Besides all these advantages, he was idolized by his soldiers. He combined the imagination of a Napoleon with the cool judgment of a Wellington.

But, when all is said and done, he must remain a great man of a prose age; there is a lack of moral grandeur about his character, which stamps him as inferior to Drake, and Cromwell, and Nelson. To this cause is to be attributed his failure, even at his greatest, to get a hold upon the affections of his countrymen. Men could not forget that the hero of Blenheim was the traitor of Salisbury. Nelson's overflowing heart, and Wellington's iron sense of duty, had no part in Marlborough; he could command neither the love inspired by the one, nor the respect compelled by the other. His character was, unfortunately, not above suspicion, and the cries of "Stop thief," which pursued him in the streets, may have been slanderous and ungrateful, but they were not wholly without excuse. Though one of the most brilliant of mankind, his soul was of the earth, earthy; he was in the truest sense a man of the world.

It was not to be expected that the struggle with Louis would bring forth a hero of finer temperament. The country was never moved as it had been in the days of Philip, or as it was to be in those of Napoleon. For one short period, after the disaster of Beachy Head, there had been a dire and recognized peril, but this had passed away too quickly for the impression to stamp itself sufficiently upon the minds of Englishmen. The country

had to be dragged, or goaded, into war over th Spanish Succession. Nor, when the struggle was fairl commenced, were the whole heart and soul and strengt of the nation ever thrown into it, as they were agains Philip and Napoleon. The politics of Anne's reign ar as sordid as any in our history, and the war was freel used as a counter in the game. Many Tories wer disgusted by the news of Blenheim, and Parliamen actually sought to minimize this, the decisive battle, b coupling it, in a vote of thanks, with an insignificant success at Malaga. It is humiliating to reflect how much Marlborough himself, at his greatest, was dependent on the lowest form of Court intrigue, on whether his termagant Duchess could retain her temper, and her influence over the petty and unqueenly woman who occupied the throne of Elizabeth.

If it was the game of the Tories to disparage our successes and our leader, that of the Whigs was hardly more respectable. As long as the war fever could be kept up at a proper pitch, so long they reckoned upon continuance in office. The objects of the war affected them little, and hence arose their arrogant refusal to hear of concluding peace with Louis, even when he was beaten to his knees. The unfortunate King would have conceded the utmost of their demands; he would have abandoned his conquests and his nephew. But nothing would suffice except the unthinkable humiliation of his sending his armies to turn Philip out of Spain, under penalty of a resumption of hostilities in case of failure. It is true that Ministers entertained doubts of Louis's honestly withdrawing French troops and support from Spain; but their proposal was as foolish as it was wicked, and its only effect was to rally the whole latent strength of France, and to show her King at his best. The starving army, that mustered under the command of Villars, was animated by an enthusiasm unknown among the French armies since the

days of Joan of Arc, and showed, at Malplaquet, that it could, at last, meet even Marlborough upon equal terms. It is not wonderful, under these circumstances, that the impression gained ground that the war was being deliberately prolonged for the sake of the General and the politicians, and that Marlborough's own disinterestedness in the matter did not pass unquestioned.

Added to this was the old dislike of militarism. The power and prestige of Marlborough, together with the influence he had over the troops, made men fear a repetition of the tyranny of Cromwell. When Addison's "Cato" was produced, not only the Whigs, but the Tories applauded it, and that for a reason which must have been exceedingly distasteful to its author. They affected to see in Cato the Roman civilian of the old school, resisting the military tyranny of a Cæsar. There was a question of Marlborough becoming Governor of the Netherlands, and this aroused a resentment at home as intense as Queen Elizabeth's against Leicester, under very similar circumstances. The hero, who had lately been loaded with ridiculous flattery, was now overwhelmed with more ridiculous abuse, and people shouted insults after him in the streets. He was disgraced, and might have been ruined, had he not taken the characteristic precaution of investing his money abroad.

This could not have happened had England been inspired with such a faith and enthusiasm in her cause as had animated her at other periods in her history. And yet the struggle with France was an ennobling feature, and the only ennobling feature, of the sordid drama of our oligarchic Revolution. We were, at least, fighting for the Protestant cause, and our own national liberty, against a tyrant. Our troops behaved like heroes, if our statesmen behaved like curs. And, corresponding to the outburst of national enthusiasm, we have the literary revival, such as it was, which goes by the

name of the Augustan Age. The Puritan tendency, which had been driven beneath the surface at the Restoration, comes back again, though in much more sober and unexciting form than had clothed it in the days when Milton denounced the bishops, or Christian fought with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation. Addison's prose was seldom without a moral or a good purpose. Defoe was almost as great a master of homely speech as Bunyan himself; the indecency of Swift was as repulsive, but by no means as immoral as that of Wycherley. Pope may have been venomous, and often unchristian, but he was sternly didactic in theory. The Sedleys and Dorsets frivolled no more, and the Restoration drama was shedding its final rays, and being transformed through Congreve, Farquhar and Vanbrugh.

Just as the spirit aroused by the French War was inferior to that of the other great blossoming periods of our history, so its literature was pitched in a lower key. To produce a Shakespeare or a Milton, to produce even a Shelley or a Chaucer, was a task beyond its powers. The greatest of all its sons was in direct opposition, " sæva indignatio " as he himself put it, against the mankind he knew. Such works as those of Defoe, Addison, Pope, Prior, and even Swift himself, will always remain classics, but they are classics of the second order. Compare the moralizing of Addison with the morality of a Job, or the immorality of a Nietzsche, and the difference becomes glaring between fire and respectability. It is literally true that a nation gets the literature it deserves, and the England of Marlborough was worthy of no more intense flame than that of the new Augustans.

Quitting these general considerations, let us consider the more directly patriotic literature that the war evoked. We shall look in vain for anything comparable to John of Gaunt's speech, to the close of Milton's Reformation pamphlet, to Wordsworth's sonnets on Liberty and

Independence. A false and unnatural classicism had arisen, and into this mould the emotions were poured. Ancient gods and goddesses were dragged into contemporary politics, while the old organic, elastic metres were replaced by lumbering Pindarics, monotonous jingling couplets, and blank verse whose listless accents rose and fell by rule of thumb.

Readers of Macaulay will not need to be reminded of Godolphin's exuberant lines about the Battle of Blenheim :

> " Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,
> And each man mounted on his capering beast,
> Into the Danube they were pushed by shoals,"

and how, according to Phillips, Marlborough, seeing where the violence of Tallard most prevailed, vanquished him, in the true Homeric fashion, by his single prowess.

Still, as during the preceding reign, we have the idea, in Whig circles at least, that England is the saviour of Europe, and Louis a wicked tyrant, who wishes to lord it over mankind, as he already does over his miserable subjects. Fenton writes :

> " The Gaul, intent on universal sway,
> Sees his own subjects with constraint obey."

Elsewhere he addresses the sun :

> " For lawless power, reclaimed by right,
> And virtue raised by pious arms,
> Let Albion be thy fair delight."

He bids Britannia wipe her dusty brow, since to her the delivered nations bow, and writes with pious satisfaction :

> " The wandering ghosts of twenty thousand slain
> Fly sullen to the shades from Blenheim's mournful plain."

Congreve, in an ode which he explains in a preface to be truly Pindaric, proclaims that " Ramillia's day " is an occasion more famous than Cannæ's illustrious fight, or famed Pharsalia's field. Marlborough runs his course,

like the sun, from clime to clime; Tyranny is bidden to join night in Nova Zembla; veteran Gauls, unused to yield, lie on Blenheim's plain imploring mercy; Belgia is saved; Brabant is freed; justice is restored to earth, and, thanks to Marlborough, peace again reigns.

Poor Boileau, after Blenheim, comes in for another trouncing from Prior, who means to teach the French that,

"As we have conquerors, we have poets too."

According to this poet, Marlborough dooms the fight; dreadful he draws his sword, and charges on the foe, crying, "Anne and St. George," whereupon they, naturally panic-stricken by such heroism, retire in confusion.

Hughes, in an epilogue for a benefit night at the Queen's Theatre, gratifies the audience with the comfortable reflection that

"Our envy'd isle through Europe sheds her light."

More matter-of-fact is Addison's "Campaign." He, at least, condescends to narrate what actually happened, and disdains, as he says, to call down gods in factions, or to make personified rivers arise from their oozy beds. England appears in her familiar rôle as guardian of the Continent, towards whom the eyes of nations are anxiously turned, and upon whose prowess they rely. Heaven rewards her virtue, and choice of a Godlike leader, by showers of blessings. Addison's Muse goes into raptures over the "rivers of blood and hills of slain," that mark England's triumphant career. In vain do the French cavalry try to resist, for

"The meanest Briton scorns the proudest slave,"

a sentence that reminds us of Voltaire's Thames waterman. The captive Tallard is magnanimously bidden to take comfort, and not blush to yield to such conquerors. Even the ghosts of illustrious Englishmen come up to take part in the chorus of congratulation. One bellicose

pamphlet, happily not in verse, is entitled " Great news from Drake and Raleigh's ghosts," and in another, William III appears, to inspire his former subjects in these words: " Push on your bold squadrons, the Toads fly—o blessed day! I have my wish! "

But it is Addison who voices what is best in the Whig spirit. His " Cato," which created such a tempest of enthusiasm on the night of its production, shows to what depths the English tragic drama has sunk, even in the hands of a capable man. Cato is evidently Addison's beau-ideal of a patriot, and a man. He is continually practising virtue, and talking about it. He means, at all costs, to preserve his country's freedom against usurping Cæsar, and he says:

" Thy life is not thy own when Rome demands it,"

and yet his patriotism is mixed up with a vague love of humanity at large. He speaks of Rome as the power

' That humbled all the tyrants of the earth,
That set the nations free, Rome is no more!
O liberty! O virtue! O my country! "

And in words which are afterwards misquoted in the article " Nation " in Diderot's Encyclopædia, he describes his son as:

" The firm patriot there
(Who made the welfare of mankind his care)
And still by faction, vice, and fortune crossed
Shall find his noble labour was not lost."

In a prose essay, published early next reign in the " Freeholder," Addison states in sober prose his conception of patriotism. He shows, in the first instance, that patriotism has too often been cynically depreciated for selfish or party reasons, and that there is no surer sign of the decay of virtue than lack of zeal on the part of a nation's inhabitants for her good. It is a virtue instinctive in the most barbarous as well as the most civilized peoples. Reason comes to the support of instinct, for

patriotism benefits most those nearest and dearest to us; it has been the characteristic of the most virtuous nations and the most illustrious men; actions proceeding from this source are more celebrated than any others. Here, too, Addison defines his relations towards the cosmopolitan ideal, which ought to have some place in our thoughts, but "though our love should reach to the whole species, a greater proportion of it should exert itself towards the community in which Providence has placed us."

Thus the patriotism of the War Party turns out to be a very sober and prosaic affair, not comparable with that of Elizabethans, or Ironsides. When it tries to sing, it is too ridiculous to be taken seriously, but when it is content to talk, it can speak the language of reason and common sense. To come from the general to the particular, the case for Whig patriotism, during Anne's reign, is obvious enough. The Whigs could plead that they were continuing the Protestant tradition of the Dunes and the Armada. They could claim that they had raised our arms to a glorious and honourable reputation; that they had been foremost in saving England and Europe from the ambition of a tyrant; that they had finally united Great Britain under one Government. Nay, more, they had adopted what was best in the policy of the Restoration; for the France of Colbert had threatened to take the place of Holland, as our commercial and colonial rival. Writing in 1707, just after we had broken the power of Louis in Flanders, and when we were at the very zenith of our success, Addison put the case for the War Party with his usual lucidity. "The French," he says, "are certainly the most implacable, and the most dangerous enemies of the British nation." He talks of a natural state of war as existing between the two countries, and would have it that our national well-being is staked on our success or failure in the war. His arguments, true to the spirit of the age, and

truer still to that of the Whig Party, run largely upon economic lines. The woollen manufacture, which is the strength of our industry, will receive a fatal blow if we lose our Spanish market, and if the French have unrestricted access to Spanish wool. Again, Spain commands the entrance to the Mediterranean (Addison evidently fails to appreciate the value of Gibraltar), and in alliance with France can strike a deadly blow at the Levant trade. Addison even tries to make out, that the French war-chest is being replenished with the wealth of the Indies. For these reasons, especially, the House of Bourbon must at all costs be kept out of Spain. "In the present conditions of the world," says Addison, "wealth and power are the same thing."

In face of a declaration so explicit, we cannot fail to be surprised when, a few pages later, Addison executes a complete *volte-face*, in his efforts to reconcile the militarist and economic tenets of his party. He is afraid England will degenerate, if she gets out of the practice of fighting, and, though we have command of the sea, he is nervous about the effects of a sudden raid. "Minds that are altogether set on trade and profit, contract a narrowness of temper, and at length become incapable of great or generous resolutions." There is, in this inconsistency of Addison, some reflection of the incoherent nature of the Whig Party itself, both as regards doctrine and membership. It included such diverse elements as the majority of the peerage (until the Tories turned the scale by creating peers), the mercantile and moneyed interest, and the dissenting community. Not that Whiggism was by any means exclusively confined to these classes, for we must remember that the greatest of its leaders was a hard-riding, hard-living country squire. But the bias of the party was towards the moneyed interest, and the moneyed interest stood to profit by the war.

One service of priceless value must be placed to the

credit of the Whigs. They made England and Scotland one nation. The means by which this was brought about was characteristic, both of the times and the men. The covenanting spirit had been replaced by a fanaticism of a less admirable kind. The whole of Scotland had gone mad over a wild-cat scheme for establishing a colony on the Isthmus of Darien, and, incidentally, of engaging in other trading operations of the most diverse nature. The two nations were protected against each other, and the utmost jealousy was aroused among the English merchants at the prospect of Scottish competition, nor were even the Spaniards more pleased at the ignominious collapse of the whole scheme. A serious question of international law arose out of the responsibility of our King for enterprises, over which the English Parliament had no control, and which they would gladly have seen destroyed. The Scots, on the other hand, were committed to two bloody and expensive wars against their old ally, France. The Hanoverian succession bade fair to rend asunder the two nations, for the Scots were not pledged to the English candidate. Bitterness between Englishman and Scot was so intense, that a poor innocent sea-captain could be hanged at Edinburgh on a trumped-up charge, simply because he was an Englishman. The breaking point had been reached, and it is to the infinite credit of our statesmen that they managed to settle the question, once and for all, upon a sound political, commercial and ultimately spiritual basis.

Neither party could claim a monopoly of patriotism, and the Whigs had probably, for the time, outlived their usefulness. The Tory case against the war was becoming overwhelming, and we can study it as it is presented in what is, perhaps, the ablest pamphlet literature of all time, or in the grave and lucid reflections of the statesman who negotiated the peace. The majority of the Tories would have admitted, with Bolingbroke, that we did right in

embarking on the war; but it was now becoming evident that we were committing ourselves to objects, which we had not entertained at the beginning, and, above all, that British interests were being recklessly sacrificed to those of the allies. The Dutch had, from the very outset, behaved with a meanness almost amounting to treachery. The plans of Marlborough were hampered and thwarted, again and again, by their Commissioners. As for Austria, she was notoriously unable to fulfil her engagements, and she behaved with a selfishness hardly inferior to that of the Dutch. She ruined the critical operations round Toulon, by diverting an army for the conquest of Naples; she negotiated, on her own account, an agreement by which the French troops were released from Italy, to help destroy our army at Almanza. There was the gravest reason, too, for suspecting that if we did not make a peace for ourselves, we should be forestalled by our allies.

It was easy to show that Addison's case for prolonging the war rested on a fallacy. The assumption that a Bourbon at Madrid necessarily implied the union of France and Spain, was unwarrantable in theory, and was to be disproved in fact. If there was any danger to the balance of power, the old union of Austria and Spain was fraught with as much or as little peril, and after the death of Joseph I, it became apparent that this was what we were fighting for. "A plague on both your houses," was what England might very justifiably have said under the circumstances. Besides, the power of France was broken for a century, and she was no longer the terror of Europe. When one of the French noblemen asked Bolingbroke why he had let them off so cheaply, he replied, with perfect truth, "Because we were no longer afraid of you."

The views of the party, which opposed the war, are set forth in an allegory, which has given us the character of

that archetypal Englishman, John Bull. The pamphlet, which has been falsely ascribed to Swift, but which is now known to be the work of Arbuthnot, bears the title "The Law is a Bottomless Pit." It professes to give an account of the lawsuit between the hero and Lewis Baboon. John is pictured as an honest, plain-dealing tradesman, of an obstinate and uncertain temper. He is a good fellow, open, hospitable, amenable to flattery, and fears nothing, least of all old Lewis Baboon or Louis XIV, and though a shrewd man of business, he is negligent of his accounts and fond of his bottle. He is drawn into a ruinous lawsuit with Lewis, over the succession to the estate of a pompous old bankrupt, called Lord Strutt, in other words, Spain. John and Lewis have taken the liberty, during the old gentleman's life, of parcelling out his estate, much to their victim's indignation, and when he dies, the partitioners go to law with each other.

The Tory prejudice against the allies comes out clearly. The two other parties to the suit are Nic Frog, or Holland, a mean, close-fisted curmudgeon, and Lord South, or the Archduke, a ridiculous boaster. These worthies are out to fill their own pockets, at the expense of John, almost as much as Lewis. Meanwhile, John has employed a crafty old dishonest attorney, called Hocus, or Marlborough, who is in league with John's wife or the Whig Parliament, and it is some time before John gets wind of their intrigue. Meanwhile all parties to the suit have been suffering ruinous loss, and so infatuated is John that he throws up his business, and thinks and talks of nothing but law. At last Mrs. Bull dies, and John marries another wife, who shows him what a fool he has been in thus ruining himself, and advises him to look into his accounts, which he does, and finds that he has been grossly swindled by Hocus and Frog. The friends of the late Mrs. Bull heap all kinds of abuse on the new wife, for her ingratitude to

Hocus, but, after some time, John manages to enter into a composition with Lewis Baboon, to the infinite disgust of that cheat Nic Frog.

"John Bull" is a fair rendering of the Tory case. The Tories stand for a certain dogged nationalism, which is afraid of British interests being sacrificed to those of foreigners. Despite the fact that they represent the landed interest, commercial considerations bulk largely in their thoughts, as we might expect from the growth of trade, and the growing materialism of the age. The original John Bull is a tradesman. The fact that the landed interest, or their leaders, were not true to their own traditions, probably accounts for their failure to profit by the great opportunity vouchsafed to them after the Sacheverell trial.

There can be no doubt that, towards the end of Anne's reign, the feeling of the country was overwhelmingly Tory. Even the glories of the war were unable to make the Whigs popular; the people loved their Queen, and both Queen and people rallied in support of the Church. The few years of Tory ascendancy form one of the most perplexing and controversial periods in our history. The Whig bias, which has prevailed so largely among the historians of the nineteenth century, has, in recent years, been opposed by an undiscriminating Tory reaction little less mischievous. An attempt has even been made to whitewash Bolingbroke, and to make him out a high-minded and patriotic statesman, whose career was fatally marred by the one impetuous mistake of embracing the Pretender, as the result of intolerable injustice. Even Oxford has attracted a certain amount of sympathy, by his plucky conduct under misfortune, and by his known literary sympathies.

To talk of the Whig leaders as if they were any more scrupulous or honourable than their opponents, is to fly in the face of facts; but to talk of the Tories as if they set up

a higher and more patriotic ideal of statesmanship than the Whigs, is not less absurd. The story of party politics under Anne is of fascinating interest, but it is an interest of a rather painful order. Among many brilliant politicians, it is hard to find a good one, nor is there anything to choose between the two parties. Against the traitor Marlborough, we may put the rebel Bolingbroke; against the time-serving Godolphin, the time-serving Oxford. Court intrigues, of the most petty and ignoble description, swayed the destinies of the nation; now it is the termagant Sarah driving the poor Queen almost mad with her insolence; now it is the pitiless Swift hounding Mrs. Masham from her dying son, to ply her task of royal favourite. The party game was played with its utmost rigour, and it is no wonder that the country suffered between the contending factions.

The figure that dominates the latter years of Anne is that of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke. Harley ended as he had begun, the party hack *in excelsis*, constitutionally incapable of taking a statesmanlike view of any situation, and failing at last, for all his shifts and non-committal speeches, even to maintain himself in office. That Bolingbroke was a man of altogether superior intellectual calibre nobody will deny, and that he was capable of taking philosophic and comprehensive views is apparent from the slightest perusal of his writings. But then, so were Belial and Beelzebub in "Paradise Lost," and Bolingbroke, it is to be feared, was not on the side of the angels. The sceptical philosopher, who pushed through the Schism Act, the cynic, who could speak with an easy sneer of the betrayal of the Catalans, and who could run away disguised as a valet, whilst men of lesser mind could stop at home and face the music, might indeed be a consummate politician, but can hardly claim to rank amongst statesmen. Even the Metternichs and Richelieus, with all their faults, have stood with con-

sistency for a principle; but of Bolingbroke it would be hard to affirm that he stood even for his own theories, or, in fact, for anything higher than the expediency of the moment.

The two yoke-fellows, the hack and the arch-politician, went about the work of establishing their power with a thoroughness which might be the envy of a modern boss, did modern bosses trouble themselves about history. Harley had drawn up a plan, which still exists in the British Museum, for a spoils system of the most drastic nature conceivable, including a wholesale packing of the Church and army; but, moral coward as he was, he feared to put it into complete practice. This is what Bolingbroke is referring to, when he exhorts his colleague to use the whip, and frantically endeavours to stir up his wavering courage; this is what he must have intended to carry out, when he at last got his hands free. But graver matters called for settlement, and it fell to St. John to negotiate the peace, by which the long European struggle against Louis XIV was at last brought to an end. By that achievement he must stand or fall; and his admirers can at least claim, that he drove an exceedingly clever bargain with the French King, the results of which have held good, in many cases, even to our own day. This was accomplished, by abandoning most of the objects for which we were professedly fighting, and by leaving our allies in the lurch, with the most calculated treachery.

It is only fair to say, that it was a case of diamond cut diamond, as far as the allies were concerned. The Dutch had done nothing but evade their obligations, while the war lasted, and would have been quite ready to forestall us in making their own terms. But this is no excuse for a great nation like England condescending to the low cunning of a sharper, and cloaking her dishonour by the dishonour of others. Not only did England betray the

allies in the council chamber, but in the very field. The Duke of Marlborough, who had been the soul of the alliance, was stripped of all his officers, and replaced by the Duke of Ormonde. The new commander had positive and secret instructions to betray his colleagues, and to communicate to Villars what he kept secret from Eugene. At last the ignoble farce was brought to an end, by the open desertion of the British contingent. The scene was pathetic. Officers and men were overwhelmed with shame; they recalled the days of Marlborough and cursed Ormonde, as they tramped off in the silence of brave men, who are compelled to act a dishonourable part. The foreign contingents in our pay refused to have part or lot in the betrayal—their arrears of pay were withheld. It was a sorry and shabby ending to the comradeship of Blenheim and Ramillies, and whatever excuse modern apologists may make, the plain soldiers could entertain no two opinions, as to the shamefulness of such transactions. A contemporary ballad runs:

> "To you, dear brothers, who in vain
> Have curbed the pride of France,
> And over Flanders' fruitful plain
> Made messieurs skip and dance,
> We send the news of grief and woe,
> You've lost your gallant Marlboro'."

But the basest trick of all was played on the Catalans, the men who had relied on our support, and on our solemn promise, and were now abandoned to the vengeance of Philip. "Abandoned" is unhappily too mild a word, for not content with betraying them, we actually sent an English admiral, with an English fleet, to bombard our poor allies, who trusted us, into submission. It is a little thing, that we were able to set off this stain upon our honour, by considerable advantage to our pockets, including the sole right of supplying to the Spanish colonies

such negroes as could survive the horrors of the Middle Passage.

The other proceedings of the Tories need not long detain us. The manœuvres by which the peace was forced through the Houses, the ruin of Marlborough and the creation of peers, may perhaps be excused by the urgency of the occasion. But the Tories no longer behaved as the party of the nation, backed by the plain honesty of the country squires, but pushed their schemes with all the unscrupulousness of a ring of politicians. It will probably always remain a disputed question, whether Bolingbroke designed to crown his achievements by bringing in the Pretender. It is probable that a man, who had no scruples in joining the Pretender after his fall, would have had no scruples in intriguing for him, as he was certainly intriguing with him, during his power. On the other hand, it would be hard to believe that Bolingbroke can have so utterly mistaken the temper of the country, as to have contemplated foisting another Papist monarch on the British people. The point is of little importance. The Tory Party had become a faction, and even the advocacy of Swift, the ablest of all political journalists, did not succeed in evolving any more comprehensive principle than that of divine right, a palpable mockery on the lips of men like Bolingbroke. Indeed, these pamphlets of Swift, with all their ability, are but splendid pieces of special pleading for temporary exigencies; they surpass Junius, but they seldom, if ever, rise to the level of Burke, through whose most trivial fragments always glows the white radiance of the universal. The journalists of that age of brilliant pamphleteering were little more scrupulous than the politicians. Defoe himself could openly change his principles with his interests, and think it no shame. The spirit of a prose age was no longer tempered by the presence of national danger. The long period of Whig ascendancy was at hand, one of the most ignoble in

our history. But the other party were at least given the opportunity, to show how little they were to be depended upon, to stem the rising flood of materialism, and a Walpole was possibly less capable of harm than a Bolingbroke.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROSE AGE

THE tendency towards a coarse and material outlook upon life, which is the mark of a Prose Age, was, we have seen, only checked, and not diverted, by the triumphs of Marlborough, and the heroic steadfastness of William of Orange. The war with France had not stirred England to its depths, and after the threat of invasion had been dispelled at La Hogue, the spirit of faction had become almost as powerful as that of patriotism.

Following the ignoble Peace of Utrecht came the accession of a German king and a long peace. Thus it comes about, that the early part of the eighteenth century is a depressing chapter in our history, for it is the darkest period of our Prose Age. There is little noble or inspiring in either politics, or literature, or society. Positive Science, the special accomplishment of a prose age, does certainly flourish. But beyond that, the outlook is dismal. Corruption and venality ruled our politics, with a thoroughness worthy of a later age; fashionable society was equally heartless and artificial; religion had become little more than a collection of formulæ; poetry was a trick of stringing together smooth and formal couplets; army and navy alike were suffered to decay, and honeycombed with favouritism.

Yet it is now that the idea of patriotism becomes, at least in theory, well-nigh without a rival in England. The

idea of a personal devotion to royalty, overriding every other sentiment, was rendered absurd by the accession of the Elector of Hanover to the throne of England. A mean, ugly old libertine, probably a murderer, doting on fat German mistresses, unable to speak the language of his subjects, and more interested in Hanover than in England, was a figure calculated as little to command affection as to inspire loyalty, for all his creditable record as a soldier. But the alternative of a Stuart Pretender was one not likely to commend itself to many Englishmen. The very virtues of James Stuart were more prejudicial to his cause than his vices. A convinced and uncompromising Roman Catholic, he would not swerve from what he held to be true and right; just as the Count de Chambord, in 1871, forfeited his chances of a throne, because he would not discard the Fleur-de-Lis of his ancestors, for the Tricolour of the Revolution. Men of the type of Bolingbroke soon got tired of a prince whose stupid rectitude sorted so ill with their easy versatility.

Just as the virtues of the Stuarts (for staunchness and persistence even in a wrong cause are surely virtues) thwarted the attainment of their hopes, so the vices of the House of Hanover tended to their own profit. For three generations the Prince of Wales and the King stood to one another in a position of public and avowed hostility. The quarrels of George I with his strutting, ridiculous heir, or of George II, in his turn, with Prince Fred, "who was alive and is dead," are more subjects for our disgust than for our sympathy. And yet they served one very useful purpose, for the Opposition naturally tended to worship the rising star of a Brunswick, rather than the sunken orb of a Stuart.

The man who dominates, and to some extent typifies this period, is Sir Robert Walpole. If Drake and Cromwell are heroes of the poetic times of our history, we might almost call Walpole the hero of a prose age.

However little we may love the principles for which he stood, there is something massive and admirable about the man, a sturdy good sense, a fixity of purpose and a genial hatred of shams. Even amid the darkest night, the great man is not unrecognizable, his speech bewrayeth him. And Walpole, though his speeches are studiously prosaic and business-like, had a way of saying great things. If he had not inspiration, there was a massive good sense at the basis of his character, which made him fit to dominate his age. His wisdom in not enforcing commercial laws, that bore hardly on the colonies, his unsentimental passivity when the Spaniards were attacking Gibraltar, are evidences of a statesmanship none the less striking and original, because it is not of the highest order. He was, above all things, devotedly loyal to the Protestant succession, and he would be hard-hearted indeed who could read without emotion the story of his last visit to London, when he was suffering agonies, and yet could summon up the resolution to devote his last energies to the assistance of his sovereign in the hour of need. The noblest tribute to his character is that of his opponent Pope, in one of the most tender and truly poetical passages he ever wrote :

> " Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
> Of social pleasure, ill exchanged for power,
> Seen him uncumbered by the venal tribe,
> Smile without art, and win without a bribe.
> Would he oblige me ? only let me find
> He does not think me what he thinks mankind."

Such a man could have little sympathy with the patriotic ideal of a Drake or Chatham. He was eminently an advocate of compromise. But it was such a man that England was demanding. When Marlborough came to England on the death of Anne he was received with enthusiasm by the crowd, but he soon discovered that there was no scope for his ambitious genius. There had been a pronounced commercial spirit even in the time of

the war, and now it assumed full sway. A perfect mania of speculation was breaking out all over Europe; it was the time of the South Sea Bubble, of Law's Mississippi Bank. The foreign policy of the Emperor hinged upon the needs of his Ostend Company. So great was the progress of discovery, so little were men's eyes accustomed to the new vistas, that there was almost a romance of money-grabbing. One company was formed for importing jackasses from Spain, another for an object which was to be declared later, and needless to say, turned out to be the fleecing of the shareholders.

Sir Robert was borne into power on the crest of this wave, and most people will admit that he was the best man to whom the time could have allowed scope. Not only was he of transcendent financial ability, but he was born and bred a country gentleman. He was thus broad-minded enough to suit the commercial interest, and not unduly to annoy the landed interest. Commerce has no thirst for ideals, neither had Sir Robert. We need not go into the question as to whether he remarked that "Every man has his price," or whether he merely said of certain members "All these men have their price." The former is undoubtedly what he ought to have said. For there is a certain poetic instinct in great masses of men, which causes them to find for their leaders the phrase, which their whole career has been trying to express. Certain it is that Walpole made, and acted upon, the discovery that the men of his time were more easily led by money, than by eloquence or enthusiasm, and he made the best of the situation.

His foreign is in keeping with his domestic policy. With forethought and dignity, he aimed at peace at almost any price. He found a kindred spirit across the Channel in Cardinal Fleury, and it was under their auspices that the Triple Alliance was maintained between England, France and Holland. Even when the Spaniards were bombarding

Gibraltar, the imperturbable Minister refused to be goaded into a war. It was only under extreme pressure that he gave way some ten years later, in the matter of the right of search and Jenkins's ear.

Naturally, the Opposition made it their cue to represent such conduct as shameful and unpatriotic. This explains the cynical tone in which Walpole was accustomed to speak of patriotism. "A patriot, sir," he cried, "why, patriots spring up like mushrooms! I could raise fifty of them within four and twenty hours. I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to grant an unreasonable or insolent demand, and up starts a patriot." He divided his opponents into Spartans, Patriots and Boys. But he did not mean to imply any contempt for patriotism itself; he expressly states in one of his later speeches, that it is the abuse of an honoured and venerable idea, against which his sarcasm is directed. It was easy enough for him and his friends to retaliate on such men as Bolingbroke, and the authors of the Peace of Utrecht. There is a very lucid and well-written pamphlet in 1733, defending the policy of the Ministry, and carrying the war into the enemy's country. Of course, the blessings of peace and amity are brought prominently forward, and much is made of the good terms on which England stood with foreign powers, but there are some scathing things said about the men, who bartered away the advantages won by Marlborough's victories. There is another pamphlet, written in the very last days of Walpole's Ministry, addressed to the "pretended patriots," and being "an impartial inquiry into the general conduct of the administration; and compared with that of their enemies, whereby it will appear who merits impeachments." It discourses of the "patriot iniquity" of those who deliberately seek to embarrass the Ministry in its negotiations with our rivals and allies.

This pamphlet has much praise for the way in which

the Ministry have upheld the Balance of Power. This idea is particularly prominent in the eighteenth century, though, for all practical purposes, it is the keynote of present European politics as much as ever. It is by a law of nature, that in any community the weaker members should unite against one that seems to aim at supreme power. A Louis XIV, be his diplomacy never so subtle, finds a William III to oppose him, and William III finds allies ready to his hand; just as victorious Sparta provokes a league of Corinth, or Napoleon a coalition of Europe. But there is a more specialized sense, in which the term Balance of Power is distinctive of eighteenth-century politics. The diplomacy of the Courts was getting out of touch with the real needs of the nations. Even a despot of the type of Xerxes, or of Peter the Great, is capable of being the embodiment of national sentiment and aspirations. But in France and Germany, in Spain and Italy, diplomacy was getting to be, in fact as well as in name, a game of cards between crowned sharpers. This discordance between rulers and people was pregnant with Revolution in France, and collapse all over the Continent. It was the burden of a Prose Age.

England, we know, was able to weather the storm, and to oppose to the vanquisher of the Continent the resistance of a united people. This leads us naturally to conjecture, that the blight of a Prose Age must have been less severe in England than elsewhere. There is, in our history, something more fascinating and more baffling than in that of France, the difference being parallel to that which obtains between their respective literatures. In French life as in French poetry there is an element of almost mathematical precision, the moving forces are clear-cut, and easy to distinguish; but about that of England there is all the compromise of Walpole's diplomacy, all the shadowy indefiniteness of Shelley's lyrics. Here sweeping generalizations are sure to want qualification, and it is only

by infinite patience that we can hope to thread the maze that leads to the central truth.

Thus we shall find an essential difference between the diplomacy of Sir Robert and that of Elizabeth Farnese, of almost any German potentate, of most of the Ministers of Louis XV. Corrupt and ambitious for power he may have been, but his policy answered to real necessities felt by the nation, and expressed in all kinds of literature, permanent and ephemeral.

The mere desire to avoid fighting is, perhaps, not a very noble one, but it was necessary to keep the Stuarts out of England, and to give our commerce a chance to expand. For all the talk about Balance of Power, Walpole was determined not to go to war if he could possibly help it. We see this particularly as regards the war of the Polish Succession, which started as a dynastic struggle, and ended in Lorraine going to France, and Naples and Sicily to a Bourbon. This was weighting the balance with a vengeance, and would have been a *casus belli* with William III, and probably with the Whig Ministers of Anne; but Walpole sat still, and the pamphlet just mentioned, written six years after, justifies him on the ground that the French could and did occupy Lorraine whenever they liked, and that its reversion to France was purely nominal. Even Bolingbroke said of the peace: "If the English Ministers had any hand in it, they are wiser than I thought them; if not, they are luckier than they deserve to be." However, there were many who agreed with Lord Harrington, the Secretary of State, in regretting what they considered to be our desertion of our old ally, the Emperor. But Sir Robert was satisfied to think that through his means a war, which had cost fifty thousand lives, had not proved fatal to a single Englishman. But he would, characteristically, have been willing to go to war a few years earlier, to stop the trade rivalry of the Ostend Company.

The Muse is naturally forced to sing strange songs. Peace and Commerce became leading motives in the poetry of the time, and Peace, except as the end of a long and glorious war, is not inspiring, and Commerce needs the genius of a Whitman or a Kipling to turn it into art. Such a genius did not appear. Thus we have a poem, by a certain Pitt, upon the Congress of Cambray, one of the most tedious and futile episodes of this epoch of diplomatic swindling, which begins :

> " Ye patriots of the world, whose cares combined
> Consult the public welfare of mankind,"

and these lines, which are as exquisite a satire as anything penned by Pope himself, are intended to be taken seriously !

The poem goes on to bid us behold

> " The proud merchant seek the precious store,
> And trace the winding veins of glittering ore ! "

Even George I comes in, with Peace, for the following amazing apostrophe :

> " Fair Concord, hail ! thy wings o'er Brunswick spread,
> And with thine olives crown his laurelled head."

In 1729, Young, the author of the " Night Thoughts," wrote a poem on " The Merchant," dealing with " British Trade and Navigation," the nature and inspiration of which may be judged by some of the descriptive headings affixed by the poet :

> " Trade natural to Britain—Trade invoked—Described—The praise of Wealth—its use, abuse, end—Britain's naval stores—why Britons should pursue it (commerce)—some despise trade as mean—censured for it—Britain should decline war but boldly assert her trade——"

To such depths can poetry, even that of great men, sink in a Prose Age ! However, for all his advocacy of

peace, Young ends up with the following cheerful chorus, which, with a sufficiently abominable tune, might even have graced the revels of Mafeking night :

" Ye syrens sing ; ye Tritons blow ;
Ye Nereids dance ; ye billows flow ;
Roll to my measures, O ye starry throng !
Ye winds, in concert breathe around,
Ye navies, to the concert bound,
From pole to pole, to Britain all belong ! "

Patriotism was in every man's mouth, but in very few instances does it glow like that of the later Elizabethans, or of the men of the Commonwealth. Peace and materialism were fast making people forget what it meant to feel anything deeply. Faith of any kind was losing its hold over men's souls. The prevailing tendency among educated men was politely to bid good-bye to God, for the vague rationalism that passed under the name of Deism. Toleration naturally made great strides, when men had ceased to care very much what they believed. Enthusiasm came to be despised, and with enthusiasm went fanaticism. Pope exclaims :

" For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right,"

and this sentiment came more and more to represent the opinion of the day, if for life we might substitute " brain." The Whig Government naturally tended to select, for high appointments, ecclesiastics as different as possible from their Tory opponents ; men of the world, Broad Churchmen, tolerant and unenthusiastic. Dogma declined and scepticism flourished ; it became the fashion for wits to sneer at religion ; the parson thought nothing of hurrying through the prayers in hunting costume ; even that typically Puritan homage to Heaven, the prescribed misery of Sunday, fell into neglect.

The decay of religion, and of the more spiritual forms of emotion, was fraught with little good for the mass of the

English people. The power that was able to impose some check upon the barbaric impulses of the feudal tyrant, was powerless against a tyranny more dangerous and more sordid. We have already had cause to examine some of the effects of the Whig revolution, and to show how woefully misguided are those who connect that event with any growth of liberty. All through the eighteenth century the oligarchy of well-born and moneyed men was increasing its power over the mass of the people, and the condition of the majority was steadily on the down grade. The difference between Whig and Tory was often shadowy and ill-defined, but between rich and poor there was a leaden barrier shutting out sympathy. Christianity was in abeyance, and it was not wonderful that charity should have gone to sleep also.

Neither in the literature, nor the politics of the time, is there more than the scantiest trace of humane or philanthropic sentiment. One or two brilliant exceptions there are: philanthropists like Bishop Berkeley, or, in his own oblique and terrible fashion, Jonathan Swift; but these only set off, by contrast, the hardness of the age. Men took a positive delight in cruelty; devotees of science would deliberately try how far it was possible to make a dog suffer pain without expiring, and Hogarth depicts with fearful realism the variety of tortures to which dumb animals were exposed, at the hands even of little children. If such was the fiendishness of men to animals, a higher standard could hardly be expected in the relations between man and man. The tortures inflicted upon animals were practised with equal ingenuity upon men and women by the Mohocks, bands of young gentlemen who infested the streets of the capital, and whose only care was to give pain. That the Mohock was father to the statesman, is a supposition rendered only too probable by the conduct of men in office. To take one instance—Lord Holdernesse, one of the most incompetent wretches ever jobbed into a

Ministerial post, had to deal with the case of a Hanoverian soldier, who was falsely accused of stealing a handkerchief. His lordship knew the man to be innocent, but, as there was some outcry against the Hanoverians, he prudently decided to save trouble by ordering the man a few hundred lashes.

Indeed, the lot of those who had the misfortune to defend their country was anything but a happy one. General Hawley avenged his defeat at Falkirk by wholesale executions of his own men; the Duke of Cumberland succeeded in shocking even the blunted sensibilities of that age. The shooting of deserters was a common sight in Hyde Park. The fate of those who served in the navy was even worse, and the only way of keeping it duly manned was by the use of the press-gang. Pelham, indeed, made some feeble attempt to put an end to the system, but the Commons would have none of his scheme. The pages of Smollett show to what dangers unfortunate men of the poorer class were exposed at any moment of their lives. They could be set upon, wounded, manacled, and cased with other wretches in some fetid hold, without even the opportunity of dressing their wounds. It is not easy to forget Captain Oakum's horrible way of reducing his sick list, by flogging fevered or dropsical patients to work and death. And from Fielding we have already learnt how a lord might dispose of a rival, by getting him delivered over to these horrors.

The condition of those who went to the wall was piteous. Debtors were imprisoned upon pedantic or trivial pretexts, herded with smallpox patients, or consigned to the horror and oblivion of a brutal prison system. At Bridewell (here again we have the authority of Smollett), delicate women were set to tasks impossible for them to perform, were flogged into a swoon and flogged out of it again. But fiendish as civilized man proved himself, he was a very angel, compared with the God, fashioned by the

morbid imagination of such divines as Doctor Watts, who gloats in his verse over the tortures of the damned, and warns little children that:

> " 'Tis dangerous to provoke a God
> Whose power and vengeance none can tell;
> One stroke of His almighty rod
> Will send young sinners quick to Hell."

Certainly England was not unique, or even the most callous among the nations. Breaking on the wheel, and tortures even more elaborate, were not unknown in France; Frederick the Great literally whipped his troops into action; Peter the Great declared that, by flogging two out of every three recruits to death, he could make the third a soldier. Readers of Voltaire's "Candide" will know that the customs of Continental armies were not any more humane than those of our own. The eighteenth century had, in fact, cast its blight all over Europe, and its brutality and hardness were not confined to one nation. Everywhere we have the same abeyance of religion, everywhere the exaltation of the brain over the soul, everywhere a predominance of form and weakening of creative genius. In France Corneille had been diluted into Racine, and Racine had shrunk to Marivaux; Claude and Poussin were succeeded by Watteau, and he again by Fragonard, and by Boucher, with his frivolous sunshine colouring and alabaster goddesses. In Germany the century opens upon solemn and courtly poetasters like Gottsched, the slaves of a foreign convention. In Spain greatness died with Velasquez and Murillo, save perhaps for the silvern portraiture of Goya.

Architecture, which had attained a real if worldly magnificence under the auspices of Wren and Inigo Jones, was now ceasing to have a soul of its own. Like the Italian eclectic painters, our architects had never before studied their craft so minutely, nor attained to such a perfect knowledge of technique. Yet all the science in the world

could not redeem the artist who had nothing to express. The landscape painters were always putting classical ruins among English fields, and the architects went a step further by setting up Italian buildings in the Weald of Kent, and other abortions in stone, hardly less hideous. Did they aspire after profusion, they crowded their walls and columns with ornament as tasteless as it was irrelevant; did they aim at simplicity, they achieved an affectation more intolerable than redundancy. And yet there were men who succeeded, at times, in expressing what was best. Even during the Walpole era, there is, in the architecture of Gibbs, in the Radcliffe Library at Oxford and the Fellows' Buildings at King's, a solid and somewhat pompous dignity, that well fitted the contemporaries of Sir Robert and Dr. Johnson.

The sentimentalism, in which some modern authors are wont to indulge with regard to the fine manners of this period, is ill borne out by the writings of the time. For an account of coarseness and banality, it would be hard to beat Swift's "Polite Conversation," the whole point of which consists in its being a plausible specimen of everyday life. Some of the pleasantries of Colonel Atwit and Miss Notable are of a nature impossible even to hint at in these pages. Lord Temple showed his sense of humour by spitting, for a bet, into Lord Hervey's hat. Sir Robert Walpole's recipe for entertaining a company of gentlemen was to talk bawdry, a subject in which they were all sure to be interested. A few choice spirits of the upper class, whose minds had been broadened by experience of the Continent, did indeed attain to the grace of a Horace Walpole or the polish of a Chesterfield; though the latter, if we may judge by the account of the former, must have been one of the most finished bores in Christendom. The devilish arts of the seducer and fortune-hunter, as we find them described with singular unanimity in a score of works, find their counterpart in the heart-

lessness of the young ladies, who could find amusement in the horrors of Bedlam.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be about the attractiveness of the oligarchy, there can at least be none as to the brutality of the masses. All the old humanizing influences, the Church of the Middle Ages, the amenities of Merrie England, the popular drama of the Elizabethans, even the Puritan fervour, had ceased to operate—"Drunk for a penny, dead-drunk for twopence." The impression we get from Hogarth is confirmed by the writings of the novelists, and it is one of sickening callousness heightened by absolute venality. Executions were a common and favourite spectacle, and the majesty of the law was set at naught by the grotesque spectacle of the half-intoxicated wretches, endeavouring to die game. On the coasts the wreckers regularly plied their odious craft. Take it for all in all, the England of the first half of the eighteenth century presents fewer attractive features than at any other period of our history.

It was the most unfortunate of centuries for the beginning of a Social Revolution. The great change that was to take place towards its close, was but the acceleration of tendencies that had been operating all along. The most dangerous and characteristic features of the modern industrial system had already been settled, in their main lines, before the Industrial Revolution. It is not our purpose to write the economic history of these Islands, but it is important to realize the nature of this change, for only thus can we understand the patriotism—or the lack of it—of the last two centuries. That a revolution of some sort was bound to come is not to be denied, for the progress of mechanical invention, and the increase of markets, made it inevitable that industry should be organized more and more upon capitalist lines. But that this should involve the monopolizing of the means of production, and a degradation of labour often amount-

ing to enslavement, without a slave's security, was not necessary at all, and might have been mitigated, or avoided altogether, by timely statesmanship.

The first thing needful was that all classes in the nation should be animated by a religious and patriotic fervour, sufficient to make them sink their interests in the common good. It is a noble thing for a soldier to lay down his life for his country, but it is a nobler and rarer virtue for men in time of peace to be ready to sacrifice, without a murmur, their class selfishness, and lay down even property for the cause. This was the last thing likely to occur to the godless age of Walpole. Indeed, we seldom have the faintest recognition that a social problem existed at all, nor the least attempt to remedy abuses, that to our sensitive nerves appear intolerable. It is only fair to say that this insensibility appears to have animated all classes alike. Materially, England was never so prosperous nor so conscious of her prosperity, in comparison with other nations. It is probable that the nervous systems of our ancestors were of a stouter and less delicate nature than our own, both readier to inflict pain and more capable of bearing it. It is certain that never were Englishmen so proud of themselves. A coarse and jovial well-being, supposed to be specially characteristic of John Bull, or Jack English, was contrasted with the starvation and slavery of Frenchmen.

> " Oh, the roast beef of old England,
> And oh, for old England's roast beef ! "

goes a song of the time.

Nor was this sentiment quite unjustified. Tyrannous and corrupt as parliamentary rôle might be, the rulers went in very real fear of provoking the mob. This was best seen during Walpole's Excise Scheme. The most excellent arguments were urged, and could be urged, in its favour ; but the mob, who were more concerned with the practical aspect of the case, scented an increase of

official tyrannies, and a curtailment of their victuals such as no remission of the land tax, nor check upon smuggling, would have atoned for. They believed, in the language of modern politics, that "their food would cost them more"; therefore they took the reprehensible course of rioting, and Walpole, who saw that he could not get his scheme to work without the measure, unprecedented since the Long Parliament, of coercing the people by armed force, prudently let it drop.

Whatever view we may take of the Excise, we must admit that in another case the patriotism of the country was ahead of that of its rulers. For Gibraltar would almost certainly have been sacrificed, had it not been for the tempest of indignation such a surrender would have excited in the country. Indeed, the people were keenly sensitive upon any point of national honour, and it was an outburst of national indignation that forced Walpole into the war with Spain. They were easily moved to anger by conduct that savoured of cowardice in the face of an enemy. The case of Admiral Byng is well known, but the following incident, which occurred ten years earlier, may not be so familiar. A certain captain, in command of one of four English ships, gave chase to two Frenchmen. Three ships got left behind, and on the Frenchmen turning, the Englishman declined to fight, urging that his ship was too unseaworthy to fight her guns, a not unplausible plea under the regime of the Pelhams. His uncle had just left the Admiralty, a fact that may or may not account for his acquittal by a ridiculous court martial, where he was neither prosecuted nor cross-examined. But the matter does not end here. When the gallant captain went down to Portsmouth, he was literally hooted out of the docks, the tars and workers assuring him wherever he went that he was quite safe, for there were no Frenchmen about. The story ends happily, for he was subsequently promoted to the rank of admiral,

to the comptrollership of the navy, and to be a Junior Lord of the Admiralty under his uncle. He is said to have been instrumental in changing our naval uniform from red to blue! Such were the methods of English government, such the temper of an English mob.

On the whole, the poorer class must be accounted the healthiest part of our social system, for though they were brutal, they were by no means degenerate. However badly they were led, the English soldiers were as brave as they had been in the days of Cromwell and Marlborough. The column at Fontenoy was as glorious in its defeat as the Light Brigade. The mob was more patriotic, and more often right than the oligarchy, but its power was not permanent, and other influences of a more sinister nature were moulding our destinies.

The moneyed interest was almost as much a terror to the Government, as the mob. It was in possession of the purse strings, and the fear of the City refusing to lend had much to do with Byng's execution. The long period of Whig ascendancy was, of course, a triumph for that section of the community which had helped to keep William III on the throne, by subscribing to the Bank of England. But between money and land there was no very sharp opposition. The completeness of the Tory defeat had done much to blur the few distinctive principles the Whig party possessed. It was not their interest to harry the landowner. Not only did they include many of the largest landowners in the kingdom, but the first object of the *nouveau riche* was to buy himself an estate. In fact, the Member of Parliament was required by law to be a landowner. Thus Walpole was ever solicitous to conciliate the squires, and to keep the land tax as low as possible. He had hoped to abolish it altogether by his excise scheme. On the other hand, the Dissenters, the most democratic element in the party, were treated by him with the most cynical disregard of their claims.

Thus money and land were but feebly opposed to each other, while they were united in a tacit and solid alliance against those who possessed neither. There was no deep-laid conspiracy, but the rich were simply blind and indifferent to all but their own interests, and legislation was naturally biassed in their favour; the more so since the poor were, for the most part, fairly satisfied with their lot. In several ways, the democratic safeguards of our social system were undermined. The Church had already been brought under the heel of the squire, and it only remained to crush out the small independent farmer, the yeoman, who had been the backbone of the country in Fortescue's days, and who had maintained the Puritan cause in the Civil Wars. In several ways he was hit. The Justices of the Peace, who ruled the counties with a rod of iron, were drawn from the class above him. The Game Laws, which had come in with the use of shot guns, bore hardly upon him. The policy of the Government was to favour the big owner at his expense. Walpole's expedient of commuting land tax for excise had already been tried at the Restoration, when the feudal tenures were abolished, and this, as well as the increased facilities for entail, were in favour of the big man. Again, the system of corn bounties was all on the side of the man who had enough capital to hold back his produce, and wait upon the fluctuations of demand. So the yeomen, from being the strongest class in the kingdom, were fast ceasing to count as a class at all, and with them went the last check upon the tyranny of the squire.

We have already seen that the squires, as a whole, were the most well-meaning class imaginable. They confidently believed, and no doubt with justice, that upon them depended the strength of England. The rational and scientific spirit of the eighteenth century gave a progressive bent to their energies, and our own age has proved that no tyranny can be so heartless and so un-

scrupulous as that which disguises itself under the mask of science. Even Chatham, as we learn from the recently published Miller correspondence, could write to an enclosing landlord in terms of such enthusiasm as: "Now let landskip yield to the useful but homely ideas of hedging and ditching, gates, mounds, etc. Are you advanced in your enclosing scheme enough to be sure to come to Parliament at the very beginning of the session? My advice to you is to lose no time." No doubt the land of England was cultivated upon a backward and irrational system, and no doubt educated and progressive men could make out an unanswerable case against the old common fields. This was the excuse, and the honest excuse, for a revolution from above, which transformed the whole aspect of the countryside, and brought into being the modern system of landownership.

During the period of Whig ascendancy the number of Enclosure Acts was small, as compared with what was to follow under the reign of George III. But the ball was set rolling, and the rest was only a matter of time. Into the pros and cons of enclosure we have no cause to go. It must be fairly obvious, that a revolution engineered by an all-powerful fraction of the community, with a zeal for progress, and no very keen sense of the rights of their neighbours, could only end in one way. Such liberty as had survived in the English villages was crushed out with an iron hand. The poor people, most of whom had been possessed of certain rights of pasture or cultivation, were reduced wholesale to the status of day labourers—landless and without resource. All this, or most of it, was accomplished with the best conscience in the world, and indeed there is little evidence, during the greater part of the century, of any general feeling of resentment. When the crisis came, during the French Revolution, the countryfolk proved, on the whole, splendidly loyal to their betters —and plunderers.

A similar process was going on in the industrial world; and it, also, had only done a fraction of its work during the Whig ascendancy. Capital, and its monopoly, was increasing the power of the employer and lowering the status of the labourer. Here again the policy of the Government was all in favour of the big man. Walpole, indeed, in the King's speech in which he outlined the principles of his commercial policy, does speak about giving employment to the poor, but the practical tendency of his legislation was to provide profits for the rich. The mercantile system, which he brought to a pitch of perfection, was all in favour of the man with capital. Careful protection of industry, frequent changes of the tariff, temporary encouragements by bounties and drawbacks, and the constant attempt to secure fresh markets, worked in favour of the man who could afford to hold back his stock, and rendered more than ever necessary the judgment of the entrepreneur, the captain of industry. All through the first half of the eighteenth century, the domestic system was fighting a losing battle against the rising power of the capitalized system. Just as the agricultural labourer was losing his independent status and common rights, so his industrial comrade was changing his plot of land and comparative freedom for the dependence and discipline of the capitalist's employee.

The prejudice of the ruling caste came out plainly in the regulations that were passed to prevent the men from combining to sell their labour at their own price. As Mr. Sidney Webb has pointed out, when the masters in any particular trade were faced with a budding trade union, they did not always fall back upon the existing law, though this was already biassed in their favour, but went to Parliament to obtain fresh legislation—not in vain. This, again, was but a foreshadowing of the tyranny to come, and could again plead excellent motives. To combine in this way was to hinder commerce and upon

commerce, as Walpole put it, "the riches and grandeur of this kingdom chiefly depend." To promote commerce, to bring as much wealth as possible into the nation irrespective of its distribution, was, according to the ideas of the time, the first duty of a patriot.

It was a commercial grievance that brought the long regime of Walpole to a close, and plunged us into inglorious war. The quarrel with Spain aroused one of those outbursts of popular feeling against which no Government can stand. Some traces of this we can see even now, as when, trudging along some country road, our attention is arrested by the signboard of the Portobello, or Admiral Vernon. As is so often the case, the feeling of the mob was more creditable than that of their leaders. They did really believe that the English flag suffered insult, and Englishmen wrong, at the hands of an ancient and cruel enemy. The story of Captain Jenkins, which there is no reason to doubt, sent a thrill of horror through breasts which were insensitive to the more frightful horrors daily practised by Englishman on Englishman. There was a vague feeling abroad that we had not cut a particularly creditable figure under the leadership of "Robin," coupled with a not very noble desire to win easy victories, at the expense of effete and moribund Spain. One of the worst features of the anti-Spanish agitation was our belief that we had to deal with a weak enemy.

With the upper class it was different. Greed of guineas was quite as prominent a motive as the love of country; greed of office was perhaps stronger, in some cases, than both. All those who hoped to profit from the fall of Walpole banded themselves together, in uneasy alliance, to hound him from power, and this it was that called forth the Minister's scathing retort upon the patriots, who grow up like mushrooms. The long debates in Parliament upon this Spanish question are not inspiriting reading, and the philippics of Pulteney and his faction

too often have a hollow ring. It is different with Walpole's own case, which is at least put with a certain ignoble sincerity. The elder Horace Walpole, with true bagman's philosophy, states the case for peace. "War, sir, be the prospect of success what it will, is both a dangerous and a desperate expedient to any nation, especially a trading and industrious nation: it is the bane of trade and the parent of idleness. It gives your neighbours an opportunity to undermine you in several branches of trade. . . ." And so on, in the style of poor Dudley's "War is very dangerous to the soul and the body."

Unfortunately, the commercial argument was not all upon one side. The mercantile temperament is naturally pacific, but occasions may nevertheless arise in which war may not only be helpful, but even necessary for trade. The merchant is helpless without markets, and if these are closed, it may pay to force them open. Lord Carteret, by far the ablest head among the Opposition, if we except the budding genius of Pitt, put this side of the case with masterly clearness. Our all might now be said to be at stake—the supreme day had come. England had only retained her independence by her commerce; by her commerce she had baffled all attacks upon her religion, her liberties and her rights. Once trade is ruined, the nobility is ruined, and the whole nation undone. So speaks the brilliant diplomat and man of the world, but a more fiery note is struck by Pitt. Speaking of Walpole's Peace Convention, he cries, "The complaints of your despairing merchants, the voice of England has condemned it; be the guilt of it on the head of the adviser!"

Except for Carteret and Pitt, the agitation was thin enough on the part of its promoters. It was one of those essentially ignoble outbursts, to which we may justly apply the term Jingo. We were conscious of overwhelming strength, the absence of any sort of danger, and the prospect of unlimited loot. The Convention which

Walpole had negotiated with great skill, was treated with a sort of hectoring contempt. One pamphlet declares that Jack English never cuts such a sorry figure as when he comes cringing up to a convention. Equally significant of the temper of the nation were the mafficking transports excited by the first little victory at Portobello. Had we conquered the whole of the Indies and dictated peace at Madrid, our delight could hardly have been more exubèrant. Admiral Vernon, the "brave and happy Vernon," was the temporary subject of an adulation, such as had hitherto beslavered no other English seaman; it was remembered that his success was not only a national, but perhaps still better, a party triumph, for he was of the faction opposed to Walpole.

Grub Street was all agog with patriotism. The two most considerable literary productions of the crisis emanate from Akenside and Glover. Akenside penned what he calls a British philippic, into which he stuffs all the patriotic fervour that his frigid and formal blank verse is capable of containing. "Oh, I am all on fire," he cries, and the horrors of Spanish dungeons, and the deadly priest triumphant, are recounted, to awaken the swift-winged thunder of the British arm. Akenside protests too much, though his poem is not lacking in a certain crude energy. More considerable is that of Glover, contemptible hack though he was, and author of the dullest epic ever written. The ghost of Admiral Hosier, who had been forbidden to attack Portobello, appears with three thousand others, and hails Vernon with groans. There is a really noble ring about some of the verses:

> "Nothing then its wealth defended,
> But my orders not to fight.
> Oh, that in this rolling ocean
> I had cast them with disdain,
> And obeyed my heart's warm motion,
> To have quelled the pride of Spain!"

We are little concerned with the diplomacy of the struggle. There were grievances on both sides, and an honest effort was made on both sides to remedy them. But it is more to our purpose, that a nation unused to war, and desirous of cheap glory, tarred on by an unscrupulous Opposition, and smarting from a real sense of wrong, forced the hand of an unwilling Minister. The outcome was very different from what had been expected. The martial inefficiency of the Walpole regime was exposed to the world, and the brave and happy Vernon was partaker in the ghastly fiasco of Carthagena.

Walpole lacked the greatness of soul to retire from a struggle which he had neither the inclination to enter, nor the ability to sustain. He fell safely, and not without dignity, before an Opposition that had now become overwhelming. His fall ushered in the basest era in the whole of our politics, which is saying much. For a time the blackness of the prospect is illumined by the genius of a Carteret, but even he was powerless against such creatures as the Pelhams. Carteret's position is a singularly unfortunate one in our annals. His brilliance made him the wonder of Europe, and yet nowadays he is scarcely remembered. It is less his fault than that of his time. Nobody is likely to dispute the brilliance of his diplomacy, but so trivial and wearisome was the chess-play of the Austrian Succession, that his combinations present little more interest than those of Philidor or Ruy Lopez.

Amid the treachery and chicanery and bloodshed of these years, there was one personality whose policy was directed to enduring ends, and whose work was not to be destroyed. Frederick the Great was rapacious and cruel, but the quick volleys of Mollwitz shook the foundations of the Bastille. England's part in the struggle was less obvious than that of Prussia. There was a certain amount of genuine sympathy for a young queen and an

old ally, and even the tough conscience of eighteenth-century England revolted somewhat at the cynical violation of treaties. The Balance of Power was threatened; though Walpole had very easily ignored a similar threat in the case of the Polish Succession. But what was really of importance, was that the ancient key of our international position, in Flanders, was threatened by France, and, in point of fact, actually overrun, in despite of our efforts.

Carteret was determined that we should play a brilliant part upon the Continent, and would fain have united Germany against France. He was but resorting to the policy of William and Marlborough, under circumstances that rendered it inapplicable. Louis XV was no Roi Soleil, and the cement of a supreme danger was wanted for a great alliance. Our own army was so badly led and badly organized as to be incapable of more than Pyrrhic victories like Dettingen, or splendid defeats like Fontenoy. In his Continental policy, then, Carteret was trying to compass impossibilities at great expense. It would have been his soundest policy to have kept altogether out of the tedious and shifting shadow-play that was being enacted by our neighbours, or at least to have concentrated our efforts upon neutralizing Flanders.

Carteret succeeded in arousing against his schemes a prejudice, very natural on the part of Englishmen. The cry went up that we were being sacrificed in the interests of Hanover, and, indeed, there was cause enough for patriotic alarm on this score. King George made no secret of preferring his Electorate to his Kingdom, and it was certain that, as far as in him lay, he would bias the policy of his Ministers in a Hanoverian sense. When, therefore, we took the Hanoverian troops into our pay, and when Carteret went off with the King upon his Continental expedition, it was only natural for sensitive patriots like Pitt to surmise that our interests were being

sacrificed for those of a despicable Electorate. It gave some colour for talk about an execrable and sole Minister, though poor Carteret must have realized too well the mockery of such an accusation. He was, at least, a patriot and a thoroughly able man, and when he fell before the Pelhams, England was left to the guidance of a King who was playing for his Electorate, and Ministers who were playing for themselves.

It is a dark and shameful time in our history, that is associated with the name of Pelham. Now was reaped the full harvest of our glorious Revolution. The great oligarchs, who had taken over from the monarchy the divine right to govern, enjoyed an undisputed sway, and the sovereignty of these Islands was in the hands of an exclusive and corrupt clique. The Commons, from being a House of Representatives, had become a House of Nominees, and Newcastle actually used to keep lists of its members, ticked off according to their bribeability. Distinctions of party had almost vanished, certainly as far as any sort of principle was concerned. The old dissenting leaven of Whiggism was a thing of the past, and even the outlines of Walpole's consistent mercantile policy were blurred, perhaps from want of any ability to carry it out. Unstable and unprincipled factions grouped themselves, ever and anon, round some prominent name—the Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Cobham, the Duke of Bedford. So thoroughly were the principles of government by the people, which historians still associate with our Revolution, carried out in practice, that it was almost impossible for a mere commoner, even if he were fairly rich and well-connected, to rise to high office, except by transcendent genius or consummate knavery; while a ducal buffoon might lord it for a generation.

It is curious that, even in the most enlightened quarters, a certain sentimental halo still clings about aristocratic

institutions. The modern publicist, who of all others makes it his business to expose the corruption of the present governing class, falls a victim to the glamour of the eighteenth century. He speaks of " that knowledge of public affairs, diffused by a small and closely combined social class "—one thinks of Newcastle's discovery that Cape Breton was an island, or Sir Francis Dashwood putting a tax upon cider because he was incapable of explaining the intricacies of a linen tax to the House; of " the power of choosing from a narrow and well-known field the best talents for any particular office (which is another mark of aristocracy) "—such talent, we suppose, as adorned Wilmington, Holdernesse, Robinson and Newcastle himself; and of the "strict continuity" of its foreign policy—as instanced by the beginning and end of the Spanish War, or the jugglery that resulted in the Peaces of Utrecht and Paris.

Aristocratic government by the great Whig Houses, as perfected under the Pelhams, was, in fact, about as bad as it could be. Feeble, inefficient and corrupt, without principles, without a policy, without a soul, it is a miracle, —the miracle, perhaps, of one man's genius—that aristocratic England did not go the way of monarchial France. Our record under their governance was dismal in the extreme. The Spanish War proved an utter failure, and we were fain to conclude a treaty in which the right of search was not mentioned. What with the mediocrity of Cumberland and the senile incompetence of Marshal Wade, we allowed Flanders to be overrun, and it was only the egregious diplomacy of Louis Quinze that stopped it from becoming a French province. At sea, though we were overwhelmingly strong, we failed of any important success, and, in our most considerable action, we had the rare spectacle of an English admiral deliberately mistaking signals and refusing to fight, out of private spite towards his superior officer, and then of the court martial

acquitting the mutineer, and cashiering his unfortunate commander.

The Highland Rebellion was disgraceful enough, in all conscience, from the English point of view. British regiments were running away in a panic at the mere name of the Highlanders. The country did not want the Pretender, but was moderately indifferent to the fate of King George. The Highlanders, a mere handful of undisciplined men, trudged to Derby without let, and might have gone to London, which was in a state of disgraceful panic, had they not fancied that they were walking into a trap. The Ministers evinced their loyalty, by taking advantage of the King's need to resign in a body, in order to get him completely into their power. But it was not in Scotland, nor yet in Flanders, that the Pelhams accomplished their worst work for their country. In 1750 they passed the Colonial Manufactures Prohibition Act.

The personalities of the oligarchy are little more attractive than their deeds. There is Henry Pelham, who had Walpole's materialism without his genius; Bedford, chief of the notorious Bloomsbury gang, and the persistent devil's advocate of his own country; Cumberland, the portly butcher of the Closterseven surrender; Prince Fred, who is said to have inherited even his mistress from his father and grandfather; Wilmington, that vegetable Prime Minister; Chesterfield, a Polonius in satin; Pulteney, the patriot who sold his reputation for a coronet; Henry Fox, the hard-living, merciless, rapacious wire-puller; and that matchless rogue Bubb Dodington, who openly preached the doctrine of the brazen mean:

> "Love thy country, wish it well,
> Not with too intense a care,
> 'Tis enough that when it fell,
> Thou its ruin did'st not share."

Above them all dodders the ludicrous figure of Newcastle, to whose rare qualities even a Horace Walpole and a Macaulay have been unable to do full justice. Poor Newcastle was a living satire on his age, as perfect a grotesque of nature as any creation of Pope or Juvenal. He was not without a certain low cunning, that helped him to keep in office for so many years; nor a disinterestedness in respect of money, which is almost pathetic when we consider how his power was built on corruption. But Sir Robert Walpole never displayed shrewder penetration than when he said of Newcastle, "His name is perfidy"; and it would be hard to meet a denizen of the slums who would display a more grovelling ignobility of soul than this all-powerful Duke. From the mass of his correspondence in the British Museum, we learn how he frequently was unable so much as to grasp the meaning of the advice for which he was dependent upon Hardwicke. When Pitt submitted to him, at the crisis of the Seven Years' War, his plan for conquering America, Newcastle replied that he was entertaining a bishop for Christmas, and he could not spare the time for its perusal. It is a spectacle too shameful to excite our laughter, of the cowardly wretch trying to divert the nation's wrath, by crying out that Byng should be hanged immediately, and then expunging from his report all that might tend in his favour. It is for conduct so base as this that we must refuse the Duke even the good-humoured tolerance we extend to the antics of the pantaloon. Utterly beneath contempt, a liar, a nincompoop, a buffoon, he was, with the exception of Sir Robert, the most powerful English figure during the reigns of the first two Georges. To those fumbling hands were entrusted our country's honour, her welfare—perhaps her very existence. To such a pass had an age of worldly wisdom and common sense brought our country.

And yet it would be a mistake to talk of the first half

of the eighteenth century as if it were productive of nothing good. We must recognize, amid one of the most unlovely periods of our history, a certain burly and thick-skinned virtue, which is its peculiar characteristic. It is the ideal of Reynolds, and of Fielding and Smollett. It produces types like Squire Allworthy and the fine old naval captain, who slew with his cutlass the dog which was attacking Roderick Random. It lends a grandeur to the character of Sir Robert Walpole, and it produces a hero in Lord Anson. This great seaman, whose services in reorganizing the navy have scarcely obtained the recognition they deserve, is one of the rare instances of an English hero who was literally a silent man. We know his portrait, as depicted by Reynolds: a proud and massive figure, with a savour of arrogance about the corners of his tight-closed lips, but evidently a man, and a leader of men, to whom the peevish Vernon, whose portrait hangs near him, is manifestly a pigmy to a giant. Even more remarkable is the contrast between Anson and the sailors of Nelson's day, when the Romantic spirit had accomplished its revolution in the national character. It is difficult to imagine what Anson's feelings would have been, had a dying comrade begged him for a kiss, or what he would have made of a Cochrane, or even a Troubridge. One of the most moving incidents in the annals of British seamanship tells how this iron man's imperturbability was broken down for a few moments, when he saw his ship, which he had deemed lost, returning to the island, on which he and his men had been left stranded. He " threw down his axe, with which he was then at work, and by his joy broke through, for the first time, the equable and unvaried character which he had hitherto preserved."

The supreme product of what we may call the unromantic ideal, is presented in the character of Dr. Johnson. Of him, at least, we can say that he could have

been born nowhere but in England, and into no age but the eighteenth century. With an independence that expressed itself in rudeness, and a hatred of shams that often degenerated into intolerance; devout without ecstasy, and a scholar without abstraction; above all, endowed with a bluff and fearless wit, that could hit hard without leaving a wound, he was at once the acknowledged leader of the nation's intellect, and the mouthpiece of its common sense. He could stand up for liberty in the concrete, but for theories of liberty in the abstract he had no use. It was his idea, as it was Goldsmith's, that there was more real freedom to be obtained under a strong monarchy, than under any new-fangled system of Whig government. So, too, with his patriotism. There has never been a man more intensely and narrowly patriotic than he, who said, half seriously, that all foreigners were fools, and who could hardly be brought to look upon a Scot as a man and a brother. And yet, for the professed exponents of patriotism, he had a hearty contempt. "Patriotism," he once said, "is the last refuge of a scoundrel." He enlarges upon this point of view in a pamphlet in 1774, and sums up his whole case in a quotation from Milton:

> "They bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
> And still revolt when truth would set them free.
> Licence they mean when they cry 'Liberty';
> For who loves that, must first be wise and good."

A patriot he defines as one "whose public conduct is regulated by one single motive—the love of his country," and he holds that "no other man will protect our rights, no other man can merit our confidence." He is "always ready to countenance the just claims, and to animate the reasonable hopes of the people"; he reminds them frequently of their rights, and stimulates them to "resent encroachments and to multiply securities." Thus Johnson is ready to come into line with the other sup-

porters of freedom, but it is to be freedom from some definite grievance—no Utopian dream of Rousseau, or Wilkite democracy. He was averse to tampering with the Constitution, and dryly remarked that a man might hate his king, and yet not love his country. Most of the patriot heroics of the Opposition he despised as factious and hypocritical. He was especially averse from the sense of national honour that greatly finds quarrel in a straw. But this does not prevent him from holding that "He that wishes to see his country robbed of its rights cannot be a patriot."

Johnson's greatness consists in the fact that he was the noblest embodiment of his age. He stood for everything that the Romantic spirit, already articulate in Chatham, aspired to destroy. This lends a dignity and value even to his most brutal and wrong-hearted pronouncements, his criticism of Gray, for instance, and of Milton's "Lycidas." His attacks were not the result of ignorance or caprice, but of a clear philosophy; they were the philippics of the old age against the new. And perhaps there is more to be said for the Johnsonian point of view than we are apt to realize. We know how much was hidden from him; he could not understand the white heat of the soul, the fine frenzy that inspires all great art; he had no wings, and he did not even aspire to soar. But he possessed that discipline in which the Romantic spirit was so sadly lacking; the strong moral fibre and gravity of soul, without which even genius is but a fragile and powerless thing. Supreme and flawless merit will have all of Shelley, but also something of Johnson; and the nation that would be perfect needs not only the sacred fire, but the iron, which God hath commanded to grow in the breasts of men.

## CHAPTER IV

### MATERIALISM AND JEREMIADS

FULLY to understand these tendencies, we must look to the philosophy of the time, and we must go back for some years before the final establishment of Whig ascendancy. The rationalism, which Selden had planted and Hobbes watered, had now become a mighty growth, overshadowing the whole land. The intellectual monarch of the Prose Age was, by the general assent of contemporaries, John Locke. Even Chatham, his antithesis as regards temperament, paid him homage, and he was the father of the French "enlightenment."

We have already seen something of his political doctrine, and we shall find that in philosophy, too, he is the representative of the true Whig aversion from pushing doctrines to their logical consequences. He sets philosophy on the inclined plane leading to materialism, but he discreetly blinks his eyes to what he is really about. His elaborate distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of objects is as frank a compromise as the Bill of Rights. Then, again, his division of ideas into those caused by sensation, and those caused by reflection, is obviously but a temporary halting-place on the road to a philosophy of pure sensation. Of reflection he says, "Though it be not sense . . . it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense." Certain it is that Locke's system was the source from which sprang

that of the French "philosophes," of Condillac and Diderot, which was summed up by De Tracy in the phrase "To think is to feel."

The effect of Locke's teaching, cautious and experimental to the last degree, was to throw cold water upon all emotion and enthusiasm, and thus upon patriotism. For cold thinkers tend inevitably to become cosmopolitans; humanity is an object, which every one can find reasons for loving, and which hardly any one can really love. She is a goddess who lends herself to discussion in ethical societies; but for one's country one can join in a swinging chorus, or a forlorn hope. To these eighteenth-century thinkers "enthusiasm" was a term of contempt. It is, of course, denied that the word had the same meaning then, as now; Shaftesbury distinguishes it from true inspiration; but practically it comes to include most forms of vivid emotion.

In Locke, we find that the sole criterion of truth is reason. He believes in a God, whose existence he holds to be a matter of mathematical certainty. Now such a God as Locke's might as well not exist at all; he "has given us no innate ideas of himself, has stamped no original characters on our minds, wherein we may read his being." We may ascertain his existence by "sense, perception and reason." He is thus a cold God, a God of the brain, in fact a dead God.

This prepares us for the chapter on enthusiasm. Locke, having reasoned for himself a God, is bound to admit the possibility of a revelation; but, true to his temperament, he insists that every revelation shall find its sanction in the brain; unless it can give rational proof of its divinity it is merely enthusiasm. Thus the unprovable and subtle insight of poet and seer, the direct spiritual perception, is ruled out by Locke, who paves the way for the complete triumph of reason, by the destruction of innate ideas. This does not prove him wrong; probably

those modern thinkers, who consider Nietzsche and Blake as mere interesting "cases," would concur with Locke's point of view, and would express it with a boldness that would probably have scandalized Locke. But these are the men who would do away with fairy-stories and sneer at the flag. Rationalism is the grave of enthusiasm, and the Walpoles and Lockes follow on each other like snow and winter. Enthusiasm in the mouths of such men does indeed mean fanaticism; but that is not so much because language has changed, as because, according to the conception of a Prose Age, there never can be any distinction between the two.

Another equally great, but somewhat less famous Whig, also treats of enthusiasm. Lord Shaftesbury's work is as redolent of the drawing-room as is Locke's of the study; his scholarship is that of the fine gentleman, finished without being tedious, thoughtful without being emotional. To his mind, the best cure for enthusiasm is humour, and he hints that the Jews might have done better by a little good-humoured buffoonery than by shouting "Crucify him." This was plain speaking even in the heyday of Deism, and if Shaftesbury had lived a little longer, he might have found his ideal in Voltaire. He remarks disparagingly upon the enthusiasm or fanaticism of poets, Horace and Lucretius being singled out for special mention. To anything like spiritual perception, Shaftesbury, like Locke, is obviously dead; though he does admit, theoretically, that there can be such a thing as "noble enthusiasm" (thus proving that the sense of the word has not greatly changed after all). But, as in the case of Locke, the admission is at once qualified by the old rationalist test: "For to judge of spirits," says Shaftesbury, "whether they be of God, we must antecedently judge of our own spirit, whether it be of reason or sound sense," and so forth. "Mystic" is another word that we shall hardly be surprised to find coupled with "fanatic."

But Shaftesbury is not altogether the slave of a Prose Age. There is a certain cool and temperate enthusiasm, that he not only countenances, but even adopts for his own. We must remember that we are dealing with a man who wrote before the Walpole regime, and thus we need not be surprised to find him combating the more extreme materialist tendencies. Shaftesbury sees the Universe as a harmony, and provided that we can tune our enthusiasm to this harmony, we do well to give it scope. For the "cool philosophy," which would kill admiration, and regard love as a physical process, he has no sympathy.

On patriotism, Shaftesbury speaks with no uncertain voice. "Of all human affections," he writes, "the noblest and most becoming to human nature is the love of one's country." But with the subtlety that is so characteristic of him, he goes on to formulate a very interesting distinction between the patriotism of the soil, and that of institutions. From the way people talk of Old England, one would imagine she was the richest and most beautiful country on the face of the earth. The acid of Shaftesbury's criticism dissolves very much of the patriotic fervour that we might have expected from him. Old England, to his mind, was a very different country; albeit she has gone on steadily improving, and we have even come to "make a somewhat better figure in Europe than we did before," though "we must confess that we are the latest barbarous and last civilized or polished people of Europe." We then have some severe remarks about English insularity, remarks which we might expect from so wide a traveller as Shaftesbury, and which singularly anticipate Matthew Arnold's raillery in "Friendship's Garland." Hardly will the ancients themselves be regarded, by a people so indifferent to the merits of every modern nation except themselves. Shaftesbury is less inclined to give rein to patriotism than to rebuke its

excesses; an eminently proper attitude, but one characteristic of a Prose Age. On the whole, we may regard him as standing between the sturdy sentiment of Addison, and the cold materialism, that is so characteristic of the Walpole epoch. He is one of the most charming, the most subtle, and perhaps the most unjustly neglected of English authors, and he presents the rare combination of profound critical acumen with extreme optimism.

We now come to a philosopher of very different calibre, the genial cynic, Mandeville. In one sense we may consider him as the voice of his time, laughing at virtue, and approving all sorts of vice, even seeming to justify corruption. But there is more than this in Mandeville; and if we examine him more closely, we shall be astonished at the wizardry with which he anticipates problems of our own day, and solves them with a boldness worthy a Nietzsche or an Ibsen.

He is the one serious thinker of his time who has the hardihood to discard utterly the conventions of morality. The ordinary deist, or sceptic, or freethinker was ready enough to pour cold water upon the supernatural, but seldom failed to insist upon his own unwavering enthusiasm for virtue and hatred of vice, despite the absence of any divine bias towards altruism. Shaftesbury is at particular pains to show that a moral sense is part of the universal harmony, and that it is natural for man to distinguish between vice and virtue; but to Mandeville all such special pleading is folly. In his essay on the "Origin of Moral Virtue," he tries, with much ingenuity, to demonstrate how all ideas of vice and virtue originally had their source in the selfish interests of individuals. This essay is strikingly similar to Nietzsche's "Genealogy of Morals," and suffers from the same defect, though in a far greater degree, for it attributes too much importance to the conscious machinations of those in authority. Moral ideas were the invention of scheming politicians, who

wished to tame the original brute instincts of the savage, and thus make him easier to govern. Such a theory, to say the least of it, must undergo very severe qualification in the light of modern research; but whether we accept or reject it, the root idea of the essay remains untouched. What Mandeville was trying to show, is that ideas of vice and virtue are not divine at all, but matters of expediency. It is true that he has to make, at the end of his essay, one of those irritating concessions to public opinion which were the necessary stock-in-trade of every infidel who wished for a quiet life. Of course he meant no disparagement to the Christian religion; far from it, but—and Cerberus was appeased.

A number of respectable utilitarians are ready to go quite as far as this. Mandeville, however, pushes the attack still further. Pity is weakness, charity but veiled selfishness, luxury a public benefit, and honesty often the ruin of a nation. You cannot combine national virtue with prosperity, save in some impossible Utopia. Our deepest-rooted convictions are, in the opinion of this strange reformer, only prejudices, which ought to be discarded for the public weal. Most striking of all Mandeville's heresies is his justification of ignorance among the lower classes, and his prophetic anticipation of the effects of cheap education. A certain amount of drudge labour he sees to be necessary for the continuance of society, and it is both cruel and pernicious to endow the poor with a knowledge that can only serve to engender cunning, and to destroy content. Mandeville's prophecy of the effects of universal education might almost be a retrospect of to-day. "Everybody is for turning the penny and short bargains: he that is diffident of everything and believes nothing but what he sees with his own eyes is counted most prudent. In all their dealings men seem to act from no other principle than that of Devil take the hindmost. Instead of planting oaks that will require

one hundred and fifty years before they are fit to be cut down, they build houses with a design that they shall not stand above twelve or fourteen years. All heads run upon the uncertainty of things and the vicissitudes of human affairs. The Mathematics become the only valuable study and are made use of in everything, even where it is ridiculous [Mandeville seems to have had a shrewd anticipation of modern Political Economy], and Men seem to repose no greater trust in Providence than they would in a broken merchant."

We have, perhaps, digressed overmuch into the perilous paths of Mandeville's philosophy; for it is not when our author rises above the limitations of his age that his influence is most felt; it is as a cynic and scoffer that he is best remembered and chiefly influential. The moral that most people were inclined to draw from him was: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." There is much of Walpole in Mandeville; the same cynicism, the same hatred of shams, and the same devotion to commercial interests. It is not under such influences that men warm with enthusiasm, or perform heroic deeds. In fact Mandeville, in his "Essay on the Moral Idea," has his sneer at heroism, just as Walpole talks of Spartans, patriots and boys. Both were theoretically attached to the public interest, but with a devotion sadly different from that of Drake and Nelson. Cynicism may pull down, but it cannot build, and it was as a cynic that his age chose to regard Mandeville, and that he himself posed. But perhaps the coarse wit and coffee-house jester was greater than he knew.

Naturally such premature boldness of speculation roused furious opposition; Dennis, Thorold, and the pious William Law were among the champions of virtue against Mandeville. Most bitter of all was the criticism of Francis Hutcheson, the intellectual heir of Shaftesbury,

and a philosopher of considerable reputation. He was a pronounced optimist, and believed the Universe to be the work of a wise and benevolent God, ordering all things for good. A moral sense is, according to him, part of every man's equipment, but it is capable of being neglected or developed. Actions are good in proportion as they contribute to the general quota of happiness. Thus all Hutcheson's theistic fervour does but lead him to the cold regions of utilitarianism. To public spirit he gives his approval, but this is less from any patriotic fervour than from his wish to exalt altruism as much as possible at the expense of egotism. He is in every respect a lesser man than Locke, Mandeville or Shaftesbury. Though endowed with considerable argumentative power, he is frequently turgid, and gives the impression of insincerity. He ends his attack on Mandeville with the characteristic outburst, " Thus may thy enemies triumph, O virtue and Christianity ! " We suspect, all the time, that he is overstating his case " for a good object," conduct inexcusable in a serious thinker. This estimate is confirmed by the panegyric of his colleague, Dr. Leechman, who says, " Such was the life of this worthy person, spent in a course of assiduous but not painful study, in continually doing good to the utmost of his power, and propagating truth, virtue and religion amongst mankind." We are left with the impression of an amiable and talented man, neither too hot nor too cold, another pleasing and typical product of a prose age.

The sceptical tendencies of the age find their complete expression in the philosophy of David Hume. He it was who demolished most of the breakwaters of Locke, and let in the full tide of doubt. Even the sequence of cause and effect was, with him, no fixed principle, but a matter of experience. In conduct, however, Hume is less revolutionary than we might expect, and his boldness and penetration must be admitted to be inferior to Mande-

ville's. He has the good sense to see that the ultimate sanction for conduct must be found in the emotions, and not in the intellect. Of those who deny the reality of moral distinctions, he speaks with a contempt which might surprise us, did we not remember that it is frequently the most pronounced freethinkers, who are the least tolerant of those, who think a little more freely than themselves. Those who go to Hume, expecting to find bold or startling heresies in the field of morals, are likely to be disappointed. His criterion of merit is utility, to ourselves and to others; and upon a calculation of this kind is based a rather tame code of ethics, very sensible and virtuous, but by no means inspiring.

It is in his essays that Hume's shrewd and sceptical temperament is seen to the best advantage. He approaches social problems without the warmth of sympathy or enthusiasm, and hence we find him an exponent of the strange doctrine that politics can be reduced to a science. One might have expected, from such an acute writer as Hume, something sounder than the stock-in-trade of the professional hacks of a later age; some elementary comprehension of the meaning and limits of science; and, after all, Hume contents himself with throwing out a few tentative suggestions, leaving the formulation of his science to those who come after him. His social philosophy suffers from the same defect as his metaphysics; there is an absence of guiding principles. He seems to imagine, and that is at the root of his gropings after a political science, that legislators can do marvels by shuffling institutions like cards. Hence he appears as the author of one of the most frigid and unpromising Utopias of which it is possible to conceive. Like so many of the thinkers of his time, he looks on nations rather as fortuitous concourses of human atoms, than as living and growing things. He is here in agree-

ment with the theory of the "philosophes," and the practice of the benevolent despots.

Hume's essays are typical of his cheerful, sceptical disposition. They are always acute, but seldom profound. He is of too cold a disposition to be able to sympathize with the deepest emotions of men; enthusiasm, which he regards as different from superstition, is, according to him, equally pernicious. Of public spirit or patriotism he tells us little; of jarring rights and interests a great deal. Though his works are manifestly those of a broad and powerful mind, in touch with facts, his social philosophy is rendered interesting, rather than immortal, by his two great cardinal defects: his blindness to the organic continuity of nations, and his lack of imaginative insight.

The prose tendency was never absolute in England. Had the country been completely degenerate, she could never have rallied, as she did, round Chatham during the Seven Years' War. It is not a nation of degenerates, that can win such triumphs as Plassey and Quiberon Bay. We must conclude, then, that the blight was not universal. It was among the upper class, and particularly among the town-dwelling section of that class, that it did most mischief. From the Spanish War to the execution of Admiral Byng, we may reckon as the darkest hour; then we cut a shameful figure at home and abroad. The leading spirits of this period, who were not slaves to the Prose Age, were in violent reaction against it. It is an age of jeremiads.

This is a word that has come, somewhat oddly, to be used as a term of contempt. And yet the prophet, from whom it takes its origin, was no common alarmist, but an inspired seer, predicting, with fearful accuracy, a catastrophe which was about to overwhelm his country, and which his own observation of his countrymen must have shown him to have been inevitable. It is no more impossible

for a prophet to arise in England than it was in Judaea. Suppose that decay is really eating into the vitals of a nation, the greatest minds of that nation are sure to feel instinctively that there is something wrong, and perhaps warn their countrymen of approaching ruin. And when, as in the reigns of the first two Georges, we find the greatest minds practically unanimous on this question, we may reasonably conclude that there was some serious cause for their alarm.

We shall begin with two of the leading spirits of the Augustan Age, who survived long into the Walpole era—Swift and Pope. The pessimism of Swift is more absolute and more terrific than that of any of his successors; it embraces the whole human race; it shrinks from no coarseness, from no brutality, in the ruthlessness of its iconoclasm. It is the revolt of a noble and sensitive soul against the coldness of its surroundings. Swift was a very different man from Mandeville. In the "Fable of the Bees," you have a cheery accommodation to the blackest iniquity; since that is the order of the world, we had better make the best of it. But to such a mind as Swift's, it was intolerable that men should be so bad and miserable. He brings the world to the bar of his own idealism, and he finds it very bad. Such evil no necessity can condone, no philosophy assuage. The temperament of Swift is not unlike that of Hamlet; his coarseness is that of the play scene; his brutality is such as sent Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths.

Of his opinion of his own countrymen, perhaps the most striking exposition is the last part of "Gulliver's Travels." We have no reason to think that he was speaking sarcastically, when he said, "Who is there alive that will not be swayed by his bias and partiality to the place of his birth?" But this affection is rather that of a modern Radical than of a modern Tory. Swift is both anti-militarist and anti-imperialist. Colonial expansion

he satirizes with a bitterness equal to that of "Emmanuel Burden." He is a staunch opponent of standing armies, and, in the "Examiner," he argues for the supremacy of the civil over the military power. He is a supporter of the Peace of Utrecht. But he goes far deeper than any party hack. He is among the first of those eighteenth-century thinkers whom the spectacle of war strikes as simply pitiful and disgusting. The satire of Voltaire in "Candide," brilliant as it is, does, in this respect, but repeat what Swift had already said, in different words, in his own great satire of "Gulliver." And there is one respect in which Swift is greater than Voltaire. For those who can approach that tortured soul, with other motives than that of sniffing out and preaching at his indecencies, there are, underlying his bitterest irony, a tenderness and idealism that make it almost painful to read him. What at first seems intended to arouse our laughter is really the cry of a strong and gentle spirit, sensitive to pain to an extent of which coarser nerves cannot conceive. The horror of the King of the Houyhnhnms, at the self-inflicted misery of the Yahoo Man, is the horror of Swift himself.

He loved his country with all the intense earnestness with which his passion fastened upon Stella. The citizens of his equine Utopia, though of no experience in mutual slaughter, would die in the defence of their Fatherland. But concerning his own fellow-citizens he speaks bitterly: "of learning to love our country, in the want of which we differ even from the Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Zopinamboo."

"The depth of his love for England may be judged from the bitterness of his indictment against her. Nobody, who was indifferent to her welfare, would have tried her by such a standard, or could ever have found her so wanting as did Swift. All the time, we are tacitly being asked to compare England as she is, with England as she

might be. Swift is no ranting pessimist; the faults he seizes upon are those of a Prose Age: coldness, coarseness, brutality, greed. His horror of war springs from the fact that thousands of lives are being sacrificed, not to great national causes, but to the selfish interests of kings and parties. Lawyers thrive, not by the maintenance of justice, but by fleecing the innocent, and by making the law a maze of unintelligible pedantry. Politics, as we learn especially from "The Art of Political Lying," are the affair not of patriots, but of liars and charlatans, who are so devoted to their own fictions that they at last come to believe them. Ecclesiastical bigotry comes in for scathing treatment, both in the "Tale of a Tub" and in the account of the Big-endian dispute, a piece of folly hardly more absurd than the Bangorian controversy. The pretensions of medical specialists are treated with less respect in "Gulliver" than in Molière. Intellectual mandarins are the target of Swift's severest satire, especially those of them who aspire to be scientists. Fashionable society is alike tedious and disgusting; even the servants are not spared. In short, everything is as bad as it can be.

And yet Swift is a poet and an idealist. He has much in common with Shelley. It is remarkable that Godwin, whose philosophy Shelley adopted, was enthusiastic over Swift. In Shelley, we have the same pure and intense idealism, but most of his time was spent in dreams of wonderful Promethean Utopias; whereas Swift could only see the present like a black cloud, obscuring the loveliness of that virgin sky. The spirit was the same, the method of expression different.

Thus Swift was one of the first to revolt against the callousness and cruelty of the eighteenth century. His "modest proposal," for the killing and eating of superfluous infants of the lower class, is not pleasant reading; but it was a passionate revolt against the brutality of husbands, mothers, and society. A Prose Age is brutal

because it lacks imaginative sympathy, rather than from any conscious delight in evil. The Walpole temperament was not sensitive, and Swift was, in this respect, as one born out of due time. He was therefore pre-eminently fitted to judge and to condemn his age. It was not for him to unbind Prometheus, but he could at least carry on war to the death with Zeus. And we shall find, ranged upon his side, the most imaginative and sensitive of his contemporaries.

Few competent critics will deny that the genius of Pope was less cosmic than that of Swift. The anger of Swift is nearly always noble, that of Pope is too often effeminate spite and injured vanity. Pope's work is marred by the intrusion of a conscious moral, and it is perhaps as bad for an artist to give way to sermonizing, as to license. Then, again, he allowed his art to be confined within the bounds of a vicious system, partly borrowed from France, which sacrificed inspiration to smoothness, antithesis and convention. But, when all is said, we are compelled to acknowledge a poetic genius, like the moon in a windy sky, frequently obscured, but ever and anon breaking forth in all her silvern radiance. It is in such moments of inspiration that we find him most in agreement with those who were in revolt against the prose tendency. Take, for instance, the ending of the "Dunciad," in which the follies of the age are lashed with a terrible vigour, worthy of Swift himself.

Indeed, as Pope gets older and feels the night growing darker around him, much of the cheery optimism of "whatever is is right" begins to wear off, and he becomes more and more the satirist of his time's abuses. It is the love of wealth that is the chief object of his censure. Of course, Walpole is the central figure in this orgy of Mammon, and we find Pope saying of one of his mistresses:

> "Ask you why Phryne the whole auction buys ?
> Phryne foresees a general excise."

In his epilogue to the satires, written in 1738, he passes judgment on the England of the Walpole regime:

"Lo, at the wheels of her [Vice's] triumphal car,
Old England's genius, rough with many a scar,
Dragged in the dust! his arms hang idly round,
His flag inverted trails along the ground!
Our youth, o'er-liveried all with foreign gold,
Before her dance: behind her, crawl the old!
See thronging millions to the pagod run,
And offer country, parent, wife, or son!
Hear her black trumpet through the land proclaim
That not to be corrupted is the shame.
In soldier, churchman, patriot, man in power,
'Tis avarice all, ambition is no more!
See all our nobles begging to be slaves!
See all our fools aspiring to be knaves!
The wit of cheats, the courage of a whore,
Are what ten thousand envy and adore.
All, all look up, with reverential awe
At crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the law,
While truth, worth, wisdom, daily they decry,
Nothing is sacred now but villainy.
Yet may this verse (if such a verse remain),
Show there was one who held it in disdain."

Was ever satire keener, more direct, or more obviously sincere, than this of Pope? And is not this passage, alone, sufficient warrant for placing him with Swift, among the inspired Jeremiahs of a Prose Age?

With another satirist, Young, we have already had to deal, in connection with his extraordinary rhapsody on Trade. Young, as we have seen, was somewhat of a Jingo, he was a friend of Walpole, Chesterfield and Dodington, and a flatterer of the House of Brunswick. He was an ardent supporter of moral and religious convention, and tells us how:

"When wanted Britain bright examples more?
Her learning and her genius too decays,
And dark and cold are her declining days;
As if men now were of another cast,
They meanly live on alms of ages past."

Young's inspiration is, as we might expect, more fitful and cloudy than that of Pope. His satire is of a lighter

kind, and concerns itself principally with manners; it is calculated rather to give amusement than pain. But even Young is enough of a poet, sometimes to break through these limits, and to join in the chorus of revolt. For instance, we have this in his third satire:

> " the well-dressed belle
> Shines in the pew, but smiles to hear of Hell."

Young, with his rigid border-line between vice and virtue, and his sombre temperament, was naturally somewhat in awe of an equally sombre Jehovah, who would punish the one and reward the other. And thus we have him speaking in one place, in the true spirit of a Hebrew prophet:

> " Well may we tremble now; what manners reign!
> Yet wherefore ask we, when a true reply
> Would shock too much? Kind Heaven! avert events
> Whose fatal nature might reply too plain.
> Heaven's half-bared arm of vengeance has been waved
> In northern skies, and pointed to the south.
> Vengeance delayed but blackens and ferments."

These outbursts are all the more significant, from the fact that Young was far more ready to flatter than to blame his countrymen. His Chauvinism is curiously material, and loves to dwell upon commercial interests. And yet when the crisis comes:

> " Up starts old Britain; crosiers are laid by;
> Trade wields the sword, and agriculture leaves
> Her half-turned furrow: other harvests fire
> A nobler avarice, avarice of renown":

which is but another rendering of a famous passage in " Maud."

Fashionable society was becoming more and more the target of satire, and, indeed, its hollowness and divorce from reality only increased as time went on. Swift and his friend Gay were the two chief assailants. Swift, in his marvellous " Manual of Polite Conversation," accomplished a feat which, to the best of our belief, has never

been attempted before or since; by a literal transcription of sheer dullness and inanity, he succeeded, not only in scathing the objects of his attack, but in producing a dialogue of absorbing interest to the reader. Gay's method was different. In his "Beggar's Opera," which everybody flocked to see, he implies, though with the greatest delicacy, that the morality and ideals of the fine ladies and gentlemen differ only in appearance from those of the thieves and trulls presented on the stage. That this is a correct interpretation is evident, apart from other reasons, from Swift's appreciation of the play.

There is, besides, a similar notice of the "Beggar's Opera" in the "Craftsman," the organ of Walpole's opponents, of Pulteney and Bolingbroke. Here the Government is sarcastically rallied for tamely submitting to such slights. The "Craftsman," mainly devoted though it is to personal and transitory issues, is frequently interesting, and even brilliant. The position that its contributors took up is easily intelligible, though it is hard to appreciate nowadays; partly because their schemes were never successful in practice; partly because of the pronounced Whig bias imparted to history by the writings of Macaulay, and partly because of the unscrupulous character of men like Bolingbroke. The first of these prejudices is the vulgar habit of judging by results; the second is due to the influence of the ablest historical counsel that ever held a brief; the last is the half-truth that a man's works are to be judged by his life—that Rousseau, for instance, is merely a contemptible humbug, and "Dorian Gray" a book only fit for the medical profession. A man's life is indeed the touchstone of his works, nor do men gather grapes from thorns, but such spiritual botany is not without its difficulties, and there may be chambers in the soul unexplorable by experts. What with the religious fervour of Edmund Burke, the party bias of Macaulay, and the stolid prose common

sense of Sir Leslie Stephen, poor Bolingbroke has got a reputation for shallow brilliancy that ill accords with his keen penetration, and, when he is not descending from the general to the personal, with his fundamental consistency.

The spirit of the Constitution was all this time undergoing a process of profound transformation, though the letter remained unchanged. The supreme power was passing out of the hands of the sovereign into those of the Parliament. The Revolution had settled, once and for all, any claim of the sovereign to interfere with the laws; but both William and Anne had exercised some freedom in their choice of Ministers, and as regards foreign affairs, William had been his own Minister. But the grip of party was tightening, and successive advances were being made towards the modern Cabinet system of government. Mr. Temperley's recent researches have thrown a new and brilliant light on this process. After the old Privy Council had failed to exercise any effective control over the royal policy, an inner body, a Cabinet proper, had been formed, over which the King still presided, and over which, contrary to received opinion, the Hanoverian monarchs retained an almost undiminished control. But within this body yet another had taken shape, in the reign of Anne; a secret and informal Committee of Ministers, formed with the object of evading the royal control, which rapidly assumed the real control of policy, and over which the sovereign had no direct authority. That sovereign, a German by language and sympathy, had no objection to let power fall into the hands of the party which had raised him to the throne. The real king, therefore, came to be Walpole, who naturally sought to maintain himself in power, by keeping his friends in and his enemies out, and so absolute was he, that he forced the ablest even of his own partisans into opposition. As long as, by fair means or foul, the Whigs

could be kept in a majority, his power was only limited by a usually inert popular opinion, before which he always bowed when he perceived that it was fairly roused.

To Bolingbroke such a state of things was anathema. He rightly saw that however perfect the Constitution might have become since 1688, the spirit had departed from it. Here he shows himself more profound than Hume, who was less inclined to look to the essence than to the forms of government. Bolingbroke perceives, like his friend Pope, that the spirit of England is no longer what it used to be. Here is his contribution to the great jeremiad. "But all is little, and low, and mean among us! Far from having the virtues, we have not even the vices of great men." Speaking of the despotism of Walpole, he says, "This could not happen if there were the least spirit among us. But there is none. What passes among us for ambition is an odd mixture of avarice and vanity; the moderation we have seen practised is practised pusillanimity, and the philosophy that some men affect is sloth. Hence it comes that corruption has spread, and prevails." This estimate may be decried as interested, but who shall say that it is unjust?

What is required to shake off these fetters, is, Bolingbroke maintains, the spirit of Patriotism. "Patriotism," he says, "must be founded on great principles and supported by great virtue." But it behoves us to find out what he intended to convey by this rather elusive word. Certainly it did not mean anything in the shape of foreign aggression; it was rather a civic virtue. Just as we find William Law urging gentlemen to give up a portion of their fox-hunting, their cards, and their leisure to the service of God, so we find Bolingbroke pleading hard with them to give up their time to the service of their country. There are always, he says, men who rise intellectually above the average, but if this genius is misapplied, or diverted into selfish channels, it is not only useless, but ruinous

to the community. In Bolingbroke's philosophy, patriotism and liberty are closely associated. What he chiefly complains of about his contemporaries, is their servility to such a Jack-in-office as Walpole. They are as shameless as the Gascon, who after being turned out of a minister's door, got in again by the window. The machinery for restraining bad Ministers is stronger than ever before, but the men are wanting to apply it. Modern politicians are less wicked than petty.

The great bane of national prosperity, that which diverts the greatest amount of patriotic energy, is the spirit of Party. Bolingbroke devotes an elaborate historical treatise to showing, that whatever meaning parties may have had once, they have lost it now, and become an unmitigated nuisance. He says in his dedication that "the peace and prosperity of the nation will always depend on uniting, as far as possible, the heads, hearts and hands of the whole people, not debauching their morals." Of the party majorities, that keep great Ministers in power, he says: "Whenever this happens the reign of venality, of prostitution, of ignorance, of futility, and of dullness commences. . . . Abilities to serve the commonwealth will be an objection sufficient to outweigh the strongest proofs of attachment to the person of the prince, and of zeal for his government."

These evils were far from being imaginary, or even transient. Party government can only be defended as a necessary expedient, arising from the imperfection of human nature; and in these days of party whips, of backstairs influence, of the caucus, and of titles purchased, or granted to hacks, Bolingbroke's strictures come home to us with more force than ever. He is more than a detractor. His constructive scheme of a Patriot King is worthy of his genius, and suggests the only possible way out of the difficulty, short of actually resigning ourselves to the evil. His idea is to reconcile the old spirit of loyalty

to the sovereign, with the love of the Motherland. He dreams of a sovereign who is himself a patriot, and above the old priestly fallacy of divine right. His conduct will be the exact opposite of that of Louis XIV, who looked upon his kingdom as a private estate.

Kings have, under the English Constitution, much power for good, but very little for evil. Bolingbroke's ideal sovereign will frankly accept his Constitutional limitations; it will, in fact, be his aim to foster the spirit of liberty among his subjects. He will take the executive power into his own hands, and revive the spirit of the Constitution by purging it of corruption. He will choose his Ministers indifferently from all parties alike, and expel without ruth the old corrupt partisans. His duty is " to espouse no party, but to govern as the common father of his people." In this case, Bolingbroke thinks, he will easily brush aside any factious opposition. The King will be the master and not the servant of his Ministers, whom he will select for their merit quite irrespective of party considerations. And under such a prince, " concord will appear, brooding peace and prosperity on the happy land; joy sitting in every face, content in every heart; a people unoppressed, undisturbed, unalarmed; busy to improve their private property and the public stock; fleets covering the ocean [this is the dream of one who eschewed standing armies]; bringing home wealth by the returns of industry; carrying assistance or terror abroad by the direction of wisdom; and asserting triumphantly the right and honour of Great Britain as far as waters roll and as winds can waft them."

Bolingbroke's dream was destined never to be realized, but is this to be imputed to him as a fault? Was he to blame, that the Patriot King was to be a Farmer George, with sloping forehead and receding chin? How if George had been a Frederick Hohenzollern? How if he had chosen Chatham for his favourite instead of Bute?

Bolingbroke admitted that the Patriot King was a standing miracle, but it was a miracle that his book might possibly have helped to realize. Could the great Whig houses have barred the way to a really energetic and popular sovereign? And would not the people, who were inarticulately crying for a leader, have sooner rallied to a monarch standing in their cause against a corrupt oligarchy, than to a Wilkes, or even to a Chatham?

Even the author of "Rule, Britannia" allows a warning note to mar the fervour of his patriotic optimism. We find in a short poem to Prince Frederick:

> "Britannia, drooping, grows an empty form,
> While on our vitals selfish parties prey,
> And deep corruption eats our soul away."

And there is a longer poem in blank verse in which Britannia is discovered on the shore, weeping

> "Of her degenerate sons the faded fame."

The occasion of the poem is the ignoble tameness with which England submits to the insults of Spain, and this gives occasion for a spirited description of the Armada. The goddess exhorts her sons to beware of Luxury, which, with the tooth of many a new-formed want, eats away the soul of Liberty. None the less is Thomson anxious about "the big redundant flood of trade," and points out, that if it is once deflected, trade will pass into the hands of other nations.

Lyttelton, the friend of Pitt, writes in a gloomy strain in 1734 about Glover's "Leonidas," a stilted epic in twelve books, and contrasts the state of degenerate England with that of victorious Greece:

> "Lo, France as Persia once, o'er every land
> Prepares to stretch the all-oppressing hand":

though the poet has little doubt about the issue:

> "Yet cease to hope, though grac'd with every charm,
> The patriot verse will cold Britannia warm,"

and exhorts her to shame and repentance, "Hence, wretched nation!" he cries, in a supreme access of indignation.

Another patriot and pessimist (as far as England is concerned) is the idealist philosopher Berkeley. Writing shortly after the South Sea scandal, he discourses of his country and countrymen in a strain of almost unrelieved gloom. His essay is "Towards preventing the ruin of Great Britain," but he has little hope. "The truth is," he says, "our symptoms are so bad that, notwithstanding all the care and vigilance of the legislature, it is to be feared that the final period of our state approaches." He anticipates the stock sneer at jeremiads: "I know it is an old folly to make peevish complaints of the times, and charge the common follies of human nature on a particular age. One may nevertheless venture to affirm that the present hath brought forth new and portentous villainies not to be paralleled in our own or in any other history."

The prime cause of this state of things is the decay of religion. This has sapped the vitals of the nation, and till our spirit changes for the better, no political astuteness can save us fron the consequences of our own decay, or from the just vengeance of the Almighty. Luxury is rampant, and Berkeley, anticipating Rousseau, makes a passionate plea for simplicity of life, and recommends the adoption of sumptuary laws, both as a wholesome restraint, and as a source of revenue. For like so many of his contemporaries, even Berkeley, in this short and intensely earnest denunciation, is concerned and practical enough on questions of commerce and finance. He joins hands with Bolingbroke in attacking the party system; neither party can ruin the other without ruining itself, and "candid and generous men, who are true lovers of their country, can never be enemies to one half of their countrymen." In fact, Bolingbroke and Berkeley made

very little distinction between party and faction. Public spirit, according to this essay, has become a jest and a folly, " and all respect is paid to cunning men, who bend and wrest the public interest to their own private ends." The nation is, in fact, honeycombed with corruption, perjury, vice, luxury, gaming, and infidelity, and the end is probably not far off.

Some thirty years later Berkeley wrote a series of maxims on patriotism, which might well serve not only for that age, but for all time. We select a few, almost at random, for all are weighty enough to provide food for thought, and inspiration for conduct, though few of them exceed the limit of a score of words.

" I have no opinion of your bumper patriots. Some eat, some drink, some quarrel, for their country. *Modern Patriotism!* "

" He that always blames, or always praises, is no patriot."

" Gamesters, fops, rakes, bullies, stockjobbers, alas what patriots! "

" A patriot will esteem no man for being of his party."

" A man rages, rails and raves. I suspect his patriotism."

" No man perjures himself for the sake of conscience."

From Berkeley we pass to a less severe critic, Mark Akenside, whom we may class with Thomson as a patriot of the Jingo type, but whose poems are frequently streaked with pessimism, almost in spite of himself. There is, for instance, the eleventh of his odes, addressed to the country gentry, who are abandoning their old manly traditions, and leaving their estates in order to participate in the ignoble pleasures of the town. His argument, for these eighteenth-century poets argue like schoolmen, is curiously similar to that of modern advocates of conscription. We think that we rule the waves, and that, secure in the supremacy of our fleet, we can laugh to scorn the

thought of invasion. But the most trivial accident may cripple our first line of defence, and then where shall we be, without the support of our country gentlemen, our natural leaders ?

"Rise; arm! [the poem concludes] your country's living safety prove;
And train her valiant youth, and watch around her shore."

Even in his anti-Spanish Philippic, Akenside used language almost as severe to Britons as to Spaniards :

"Where is now
The British spirit, generous, warm, and brave,
So frequent wont from tyranny and woe
To free the suppliant nations ? Where indeed !
If that protection once to strangers given
Be now withheld from sons ? Each noble thought
That warmed our sires, is lost and buried now
In luxury and avarice. Baneful vice !
How it unmans a nation ! "

Even the bombastic recantation at the end of the poem can hardly cancel language such as this.

We are indebted to the writings of Sir Leslie Stephen for another important addition to our stock of jeremiads. This occurs in the works of no less a philosopher than David Hartley. Sir Leslie writes of him as follows: "The world, he said, was in the most critical state ever known. He attributes the evil to the growth of infidelity in the upper classes ; their general immorality ; their sordid self-interest, which was almost the sole motive of action of the ministers ; the contempt for authority of all their superiors ; the worldly-mindedness of the clergy and the general carelessness as to education." This was in 1749.

There is an article, by the novelist Fielding, in "The True Patriot," written in a similar strain during the rebellion of '45. The unexpected success of the Scots inspired that fervent loyalist with the idea that this was the punishment, meted out by a just God, for the wicked-

ness of England. "To run through every species of crimes with which our Sodom abounds, would fill the whole of your paper." The two vices that are singled out for special mention are lying and luxury. The fervent patriotism of Fielding, who hated Scots and Catholics, was loud in the support of the reigning dynasty, and serves to intensify the severity of a condemnation, pronounced with such vehemence, and at such a time.

More significant, though less articulate than that of Fielding's pen, is the sentence of Hogarth's pencil. He was a patriot of a rather florid type. We have a curious parallel between Fielding in 1745, and Hogarth in 1756. Both write about an invasion of England; one of the actual invasion by the Scots, the other of the threatened invasion by the French. Fielding draws a lurid picture of what would happen if Charles Edward were to occupy London; of murder, rape, robbery, the inquisition and the itch. Hogarth is content merely to show the preparations of both sides, of the half-starved Frenchmen cooking their frogs, and of the jolly English troops, with their roast beef and their wenches:

> "With lantern jaws, and croaking gut,
> See how the half-starved Frenchmen strut,
> And call us English dogs;
> But soon we'll teach these bragging foes,
> That beef and beer give heavier blows,
> Than soup and roasted frogs."

In the preparations of the French, instruments of torture figure prominently, and there is the fat, rascally monk, whom we also see in the "Calais Gate" in our National Gallery, feeling the edge of an axe. On the English side a little drummer boy is playing "God save the King" on the fife, for our National Anthem is one of the patriotic products of this period.

But when we come to consider Hogarth's depiction of his own countrymen, when he is not consciously preaching patriotism, the prospect is different. Here everything is

almost as bad as it can be, and yet we get a less poignant impression from Hogarth than from Swift. We miss the refinement, the idealism, the exquisite sensibility, which make Swift "terrible and dear." Hogarth transcribes all that is worst in human nature, but he does so roughly, and without intense pain. Even the horrors of Tom Nero and of Gin Alley do not move us so much as Gulliver's account of the human Yahoo, or the "modest proposal" for eating children. Swift will have nothing but the central and most bitter truth, Hogarth is content to view the universe through the glass of conscious morality, the soul-killing Urizen of Blake. There results a curious duality about most of his work; there is his real genius, sombre and ruthless, that sears as with hot iron the baseness of his time, a genius which is constantly hampered, but never quite extinguished, by the conventional dogma, which makes Doctor Watts odious, and Lillo ridiculous. Indeed, we must turn to Lillo to see this conscious side of Hogarth, unrelieved by any divine fire of art. "George Barnwell" is a dramatic setting of the story of an industrious and an idle apprentice. To a modern reader it must appear exquisitely funny by its sheer lack of humour, and its pompous moralizing; more especially in the part where George indulges in a high-flown and long-winded oration, previously, and subsequently to murdering his uncle.

In Hogarth we quite forget the conscious purpose, and crude, commonplace plot, in our admiration for the deeper conception that underlies his art. Apart from the mastery of detail, we are presented with a coherent and definite view of human nature, or rather of the nature of Hogarth's contemporaries. Folly, greed, cruelty, callousness, squalor, and above all, pettiness, have never been drawn in such variety or with such truth. Hogarth only fails on the few occasions that his machinery compels him to draw an amiable character. His industrious ap-

prentice is an unprepossessing type of prig, and we feel sure that that virtuous master of his will hardly let slip an opportunity of striking a hard bargain. But with what wonderful fidelity could Hogarth draw the red-nosed, gin-sodden porter, the ruffians gambling among the skulls, the jeering boy with the cat-o'-nine-tails, the lank gallows-preacher, the disgusting civic guzzlers! Even in the pictures that show the reward of virtue, the interest lies, not in the principal characters, but in the fools and rascals who surround them. Doctors, lawyers and clergymen are as ignorant and repulsive as they are in Swift; indeed, nowhere do we see that callousness and dullness of imagination, which were the mark of the early-eighteenth century, more vividly portrayed. Perhaps the most hideous scene of all, is that detailed study of the various forms of torturing animals, that forms the first episode in the career of Tom Nero; though it must be allowed that even Hogarth's dogs are generally as rapacious and loveless as his human beings. In spite of himself, Hogarth has drawn up one of the most bitter indictments that have ever been brought against any age. The hard faces of his characters, with their protruding lips, say more than whole volumes of invective.

The last and perhaps the most striking of our series of jeremiads is Brown's "Estimate of the Times." This work, like Bolingbroke's "Patriot King," has received scant justice from posterity. Macaulay deals with him much as Mr. Heady deals with Faithful in the Jury Box of Vanity Fair. Sir Leslie Stephen gives a longer account of him, but it is patronizing and incomplete. Cowper helped to kill his reputation with his neat couplet:

> "The inestimable estimate of Brown
> Rose like a meteor kite, and charmed the town."

Brown has suffered most from the fact that he wrote on the eve of a glorious and successful struggle. This proves nothing, and that it should ever be held to do so

is an instance of the fatalism that is one of the worst traits of modern character. The growth and ruin of nations may be inevitable, and all that men can do may be to note the symptoms; but does the patriot, who cries to warn his countrymen, really believe this? Was anything great or good ever done upon such a monstrous and unnatural assumption? If we can predict the future, why try to mould it? Of what use the statesman, the warrior, the prophet? All that the most inspired, the most scathing of God's messengers, can say is, "There are forces working among you which, if you do not repent and reform, will inevitably destroy you." Jonah cried, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown"; but Nineveh repented and survived, though it was only natural for poor Jonah to interpret his success as his failure. Doubtless a German professor will one day exhume the tablets of some Assyrian critic, in which Jonah will figure as a butt or a curiosity, but by no means as the saviour of the Empire.

Brown is most emphatic in his condemnation of indiscriminate abuse. "To rail at the times at large," he says, "can serve no good purpose, and generally ariseth from a want of knowledge or a want of honesty." Indeed we shall find him a singularly temperate and balanced author, and, if anything, inclined to be over-generous in his concessions. Compared with the sweeping denunciations of Swift, of Pope and of Berkeley, his "Estimate" is mild indeed. What it says only focuses many of the theories that we have already met with in the works of Brown's greatest predecessors. He starts by enumerating, not our besetting sins, but our redeeming virtues. These are the spirit of liberty, the pure administration of justice, and (strangest of all!) our humanity, as evinced by the lenity of our criminal code, the spread of philanthropy, and the comparative mildness of English highwaymen. We think of Admiral Byng and Tom Nero!

We have another, and still more surprising proof of Brown's moderation. The lower class is specially exempted from his strictures, but their blind weight is of no effect, "unless some leading mind rouse it into action, and point it to its proper effect." This is just what Pitt succeeded in doing during the Seven Years' War, and Brown was rather justified than condemned by his achievements. Then, again, he waves aside the suggestion that the condition of the nation is one "of abandoned wickedness and profligacy." This condition is, Brown admits, often imputed to us, "but then to what times hath it not been imputed?" The state of England is favourably compared with that of declining Rome and Carthage. We see how very far was Brown from being a vulgar alarmist.

He is now in a position to open his attack upon the upper class, and he starts by accusing them of luxurious effeminacy. This gives rise to a disquisition on educational method, in the nursery, the school, and the university; for if we cannot convict Brown of slandering the nation, we are at least unable to acquit him of having blasphemed its pedagogues. Shallowness and dilettantism are the next counts in the indictment; even Bolingbroke, who might have appealed to fashionable youths on account of his infidelity, is rejected on account of his erudition. Something equivalent to modern musical comedy must have existed in those days, for we are told that "the manly, the pathetic, the astonishing strains of Handel are neglected or despised, while instead of these our concerts and operas are disgraced by the lowest insipidity of composition, and unmeaning sing-song." The neglect of art, and the orgy of bad taste, are exposed with a directness worthy of Ruskin or Morris. As for women, "the one sex have advanced into boldness, as the other have sunk into effeminacy."

The three cardinal principles of religion, of honour, and

of public spirit, are almost extinct among us. "Let us with due abasement of heart, acknowledge that the love of our country is no longer felt." All the jobbing and political corruption that Bolingbroke had denounced, is attacked in detail by Brown. Still worse, the general corruption of the upper class has infected the higher branches of the services, and officers are moneyed fops appointed by favour, a complaint of which we have heard something in quite recent times. The clergy are tainted with the same blight. We can hardly believe that we are listening to an author, separated from us by more than a century and a half, when we read how luxury and our climate have combined to produce "an increase of low spirits and nervous disorders, whose natural and unalterable character is that of fear." Even the modern outcry against conscription must have had its counterpart, for Brown's "honest gentleman" is represented as saying, "Here is my purse at the service of my country: if the French come I'll pay, but —— take me if I fight." The "Estimate" concludes with a brilliant analysis of the effects of too much commercial prosperity and absorption in trade, upon religion, honour and public spirit. This scepticism as to the omnipotence of Mammon, though familiar enough to the age of Aristotle, must have been strange reading to that of the Pelhams.

## CHAPTER V

### CHATHAM

DESPITE the manifold ill-effects of eighteenth-century materialism, we must admit that England suffered from them to a less extent than other countries. We cannot forget that at the end of George II's reign she stood at a height of glory seldom equalled, and never surpassed in her history. How, it may fairly be asked, can we reconcile this fact with our theory of decadence, developed in the last two chapters?

First, let us note that the worst of the evil was confined to the upper strata of society. It is against them that the jeremiads are directed; it was they who had allowed manly virtue to decay, who had honeycombed the services with corruption, and frozen religion into formula; it was they who were responsible for the dearth of art and imagination. The masses were as yet untouched, and though often brutal and mercenary to the last degree, were still, at heart, sound and coarsely healthy. They were, besides, fairly contented with their lot, and if they could only get leaders, they were the finest fighting material in Europe.

Then we must remember that, bad as our own condition might be, it was rosy as compared with that of our enemy. By the middle of the century, the French monarchical system had begun to go utterly to pieces. We think of the superb armies of Louis XIV, invincible till Blenheim,

and then of that undisciplined, plundering rabble under the shiftless leadership of Soubise, routed almost without a struggle by a third of their number of Prussians. If this was their condition upon land, their chosen element, how could they hope to succeed where the Grand Monarch himself had failed, and wrest the lordship of the sea from the hands of its natural rulers? Once they were barred this highway, and involved, besides, in the German conflict, what hope could there be for that devoted band of colonists left in Canada, against such forces as England chose to concentrate for their undoing? As for Spain, the change from Hapsburg to Bourbon had left her as effete as ever, and the revivals of Alberoni and Ripperda were but efforts to galvanize a corpse.

Again, our triumph was so sudden and shortlived that it may almost be described as the work of one man. At the beginning of the Seven Years' War our prospects were at their very worst. German mercenaries were actually being brought over to protect our shores from invasion, and the affair of Byng, even though the Admiral was murdered judicially, revealed the incompetence of our leadership, and the inability of our forces to defend our most valuable possessions. The record of our arms was not brilliant. In Flanders, we had been beaten; in Scotland, some thought us disgraced. It was at the beginning of the Seven Years' War that Brown's "Estimate" appeared, and bore every appearance of truth. Even before the war was over, we had commenced to relapse. First came the Peace, by which we bartered away some of its best fruits, and then was resumed the old tale of faction and corruption, culminating in the most disastrous event in the whole of our history. That forces so long dormant, and apparently almost extinguished, could be aroused into temporary and irresistible energy, is due to the inspiration of one divine man, of William Pitt. The glory of the Seven Years' War was to some extent pre-

mature; the slow but sure reaction against materialism, that was to culminate in Nelson and Blake, was as yet in its infancy, and it is to the eternal glory of Pitt that he succeeded, for a few brief years, in anticipating its effects.

He is one of those men whom it is almost blasphemy to criticize coldly, so dazzling and beneficent was his genius. And yet there is no figure which has been the target for a greater amount of criticism, of the most "modern" and futile description. Two accounts of his career have attracted no small amount of notice in recent years. One of these, by a learned German, a voluminous work of great erudition, is valuable, if only as an object lesson of the impotence, even of the most laborious mediocrity, to sit in judgment upon genius. Every unworthy motive, that ingenuity can suggest or dullness believe, is assigned as a cause for our great Commoner's actions; not out of malice, but out of a littleness of soul, that is perhaps even more repulsive. Pitt was devoid of creative genius, his political actions were swayed by the basest money-grubbing calculations, his object, at the outset of his career, "was to procure prestige and importance by his connections and oratorical skill, not by means of fruitful work or steady progress." "Great and only God," cries Sidi Hammo, "by what law shall the raven devour sweetmeats?" The other book, an account only of Pitt's early career, emanates from one of the most interesting personalities of our time, the dilettante Prime Minister of a year. The root of the matter is indeed there; Pitt was, or rather became, a hero, and even in his darkest hours he did not compromise his future. But he is a hero, whose early career is no better than that of other politicians of his time (and what a time!), and whose peccadilloes we must overlook, in the light of his subsequent achievement. The limelight is all turned upon intrigue and political finesse, and the deeper forces that determined and explained Pitt's conduct are

hardly noticed. The book is pretty gossip, but it is not the life of Pitt; nor can we divide the lives of heroes, even for patriotic purposes, into watertight compartments.

Nor is it less than an insult, deliberately to blink at any side of the hero's character. Pitt's warmest admirers must admit that he, too, had to cope with the limitations of his age, and that it was only after a struggle, whose intensity and bitterness we shall never know, that he succeeded in rising above them. He did not, like Oliver Cromwell, wear his religion on his sleeve, and it is only by scattered and fragmentary indications that we may check the results of his spiritual progress. It is remarkable enough. He starts in the darkness of eighteenth-century materialism, he ends in the full light, passing all understanding, of the peace of God. He is caught up with Wesley and Law, but in entire independence of them, into the spiritual revival that was gathering, almost unheeded, by those among whom he moved. It was only thus that he could have acquired that wonderful strength which made him tower above the subtle Murray, the hard-headed Fox, the laughing Granville, as a mountain excels the loftiest tower of human workmanship.

The first glimpse we catch of him is in 1733, when he issued a shallow and pretentious pamphlet, to prove that all religion is superstition, and that there is no God but humanity. We find the familiar tags about a universe, which is so ordered as to make virtue a paying thing, and altogether the theorizing is that of a smart and cynical young man, without much depth or principle. We pass over twenty-one years, and find Pitt upon the threshold of his greatness, well on in middle age, and high in the affection of his countrymen, but still waiting for his opportunity. He is writing to his nephew at Cambridge, and he treats of religion, as the part of his advice upon which every good and honourable purpose of the young man's life will assuredly turn. Using the very language

of the field-preacher, he says, " If you are not right towards God, you can never be so towards man," and he urges the truth of the saying, " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," despite everything that the wits or rakes of Cambridge may say to the contrary. Twice in his letters to his nephew does he repeat the admonition, " Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." This is a far cry from the facile infidelity of his own youth.

At the end of his printed correspondence are given a number of sentences in his handwriting, that may be taken as representative of his matured and sunset philosophy. These sentences are little known to the majority of Pitt's countrymen, and yet they form one of the most beautiful and touching revelations of a good man's soul that we have in our language. The rationalism has thawed long ago, and given place to a serene and mystical calm, a perfect trust in the wisdom and love of God. Who can read unmoved this utterance of the majestic and haughty Chatham, the man at whose frown nations had trembled : " To be anxiously fearful what will become of us, and discontented and perplexed under the apprehension of future evils, whilst we are in the hands and under the care of our Father which is in heaven, is not to act like children " ? Truly a portent as memorable as any recorded in history, that amid the hard men of this hard age, the Chesterfields, the Foxes, the Newcastles, should arise one who should outdazzle them all by the sheer might of his genius, and then should aspire, as the summit of all his ambition, to the simple faith of a child. " The great end of all religion," he says, " is to make us like God, and to conduct us to the enjoyment of Him."

If not among the highest initiates, Pitt had certainly got the root of the matter, and gone some way along the path of St. Theresa and St. Francis. Both in their positive and their negative precepts, these reflections

constitute a very fair guide for the first stages of the way. The necessary control of the passions, the absolute and childlike dependence, and the supreme danger of spiritual pride, are touched upon with rare lucidity, and St. Thomas à Kempis could not have improved upon the sentence, "I still prefer the charity which edifieth, before the highest perfections of that knowledge which puffeth up," nor would it be easy to find a better account of conversion than that it "implies a thorough change of the whole man, from the love and practice of sin to an habitual holiness of heart and life, ordinarily in the use of the means of grace, and always under the influence of the Spirit of God." These are not the commonplace pieties of a retired man of the world, but a compendium of thoughts which would do credit to any theologian, and reveal a mind of rare spiritual insight, one who, if he had not been William Pitt, might have been Law and Whitefield rolled into one. This is particularly remarkable, considering the circumstances of his environment. He acquired a much sounder idea of Christianity, not only than Warburton or Dr. Watts, but even such a worthy champion as Joseph Butler. In any other statesman of his generation, such an attitude towards religion would have been inconceivable.

This aspect of Pitt is all-important, even in the briefest estimate of his career. Only by understanding his religion is it possible for us to understand his patriotism; for patriotism and religion are closely allied. On this point, at least, we can endorse the sentence of Macaulay. Pitt, he tells us, "loved England as an Athenian loved the City of the Violet Crown, and as a Roman loved the City of the Seven Hills." Even when he sneered at the love of God, he was as passionate as a bridegroom for his country. It was as a patriot that he thundered against Walpole, and heaped execration upon Carteret; it was as a patriot that he had the temerity to beard his sovereign,

But merely to say that he was a patriot is only to approach the subject, for patriotism is as various as the sea. His love for England purified and deepened as his character developed, and his religion matured, and it is good that he was not called to the helm until after nearly a quarter of a century's apprenticeship and purification. But for all that, the greatness of the man's soul was never for a moment in doubt; he has a touch of inspiration, a grandeur in action, that distinguishes him even from the greatest of his contemporaries, and early marked him for a unique place in the esteem of the common people. It was perhaps a sense of this fact that inspired Walpole to remark, in one of those massive phrases of his, "We must muzzle this terrible Cornet of Horse!" Is it not at least plausible, that the first outpourings of that torrent of eloquence convinced the grand old worldly-wise man that here was a power with which he could not cope, a rival destined to outshine him, even as the dawn sickens the moonlight? He did all he could, in depriving Pitt of his commission. It was of this that Lyttelton wrote, with more prophetic truth than might have been expected from that stiff, inconsiderable man:

> "The servile standard from thy freeborn hand
> He took, and bade thee lead the patriot band."

Nor must we forget that Pitt's genius was throughout essentially poetic, using the word "poet" in its old and profound sense of "maker." He was one of those rare spirits who was never out of touch with those unspeakable forces of which the universe is an expression. It was with the spiritual imagination, in preference to dry "common sense," that he approached the problems of his day, and it is this fact that makes at least one biographer insinuate, what he hardly dare formulate explicitly, that Henry Fox was a more capable man than his rival. It is certainly what has befogged and baffled his worthy German biographer, to whom any effort of

creative genius is almost a shocking thing, a breach of the proprieties. Certain it is that no man, out of sympathy with the spiritual imagination, can be in sympathy with Pitt.

Such sympathy is urgently required for any study of his early career. It is fatally easy to caricature and distort his motives, to read baseness into his actions, and emphasize his inconsistencies. Genius never hides its faults, and mediocrity never forgives them. The head and forefront of the charge brought against Pitt is that he was greedy for office, and sometimes unscrupulous as to how he obtained it. We admit at once that Pitt did eagerly desire and strive after power, but this passion of his was as far removed from the small vanity of Newcastle, or the greed of Henry Fox, as is love from hate. Conscious from the first of his genius, and removed from its exercise by every disadvantage of birth and fortune, was it wonderful that he should have schemed and thought long as to the best way of realizing the almost forlorn hope of his ambition? And that ambition was the noblest that can possibly lodge in a human breast.

At what precise point he definitely formulated it to himself, we know not; but before the end of his apprenticeship he was passionately convinced that his country was in a desperate condition, and that he alone could save her—a plausible theory, and probably a true one. "I am sure that I can save this country," were his words, "and that nobody else can." Writing to his wife, when the fate of Louisburgh still trembled in the balance, he expresses the hope, "that this almost degenerate England may learn from the disgrace and ruin it shall have escaped, and the consideration and security it may enjoy, to be more deserving of the blessing." In those letters to his nephew, to which we have already referred, occurs the following passage, which shows how near Pitt came to the authors of the jeremiads. "The matter of it [his

nephew's letter] is worthy of a better age than that we live in, worthy of your own noble, untainted mind; and the manner of expression of it is such as, I trust, will one day make you a powerful instrument towards mending the present degeneracy."

It is easy to detect this note, through all that wild and headlong oratory of his early career, which has been so persistently ascribed to the influence of faction. It is the professed motive of his attack on Walpole. "What is this Minister accused of?" he cries, and the answer is, "The ill posture of our affairs, both abroad and at home; the melancholy situation we are in; the distress we are now reduced to, is of itself sufficient cause for an enquiry . . . the nation lies a-bleeding, perhaps expiring." He replied, characteristically, to Horace Walpole's defence of his father, by reminding his hearers that they were the children of their country. After the fall of Walpole, the policy of Carteret became the object of his invective. Here he displayed a patriot's aversion towards linking the destinies of England with the personal interest of her sovereign. He felt that Carteret's policy was a piece of jugglery, that degraded us to be the tool of Hanover, and he accused the Minister of having taken the potion which causes men to forget their country. The Hanoverian subsidies were, especially, the object of his invective. He belittled the Dettingen campaign, disparaged with scant justice the valour of the Hanoverians, and cruelly hinted that the courage of the King himself might not be above suspicion.

With such conduct it is easy to find fault. It has been shown that in his calmer days, Pitt came to acknowledge the merits both of Walpole and Carteret; that he too was capable of pursuing a Hanoverian policy; that he supported a peace with Spain, upon terms which he had denounced before as dishonourable. His own proud admission is sufficient vindication; he owned that he had

made mistakes in the past, and he utterly repudiated that sacrifice of freedom to consistency, which is the virtue of little minds. Times changed, and his mind developed with them. He was too wise to shackle that development with the chains of his old mistakes.

There is, we freely admit, a wildness and lack of proportion about Pitt's first efforts. His mind, we have seen, was in process of formation, and he was far from having attained the strength and serenity of his latter years. He, a young parliamentary free-lance, with nothing but his genius and the Cobham connection to recommend him, was carving a career that might have seemed hopeless among the titled placemen. But the root of the matter was there, and however much his actions may have contradicted each other, there is a thorough consistency of principle underlying all of them. A profound sense, shared by the greatest of his contemporaries, that England was in a parlous condition, and the consciousness of his power to set her right, are all that is needed to explain the vagaries of his course. Let it be granted that he was over-civil to Newcastle, that he intrigued with the Countess of Yarmouth—what then? He may have stooped to conquer, but he never condescended to dishonour.

We may dispose, in passing, with a criticism of Macaulay's. Pitt, he maintains, is an example of a great man who lacked simplicity of character. We should be inclined to retort, that his character was divinely simple. Grandeur was the atmosphere in which he breathed, his similes were titanic, his very presence served to overawe a crowd of phlegmatic politicians. Moreover, he took himself intensely seriously, and his private talk often came near to his public oratory. He loved fine dress and a gorgeous establishment, and he insisted on discussing public business with the King, in a kneeling posture. But such weaknesses savour more of innocence

than sophistication, the simplicity of a child who puts on masks and builds castles. Over-subtlety is the product of weakness, and about Pitt there was nothing weak. From his most intimate reflections we may learn something of his great humility, and his horror of that pride which is another name for priggishness. The man who could make public confession of his own errors and inconsistencies, was no prig.

When, at last, he did obtain office, he gave superb proof of his disinterestedness, by refusing to take the lucrative perquisites which had been accepted, without blame, by his predecessors. Such conduct, on the part of a man who was in chronic difficulty about money, was evidence of a high principle almost quixotic, under the regime of the Pelhams. It became clear to the world, that whatever motive had inspired his conduct, he was at least above common or sordid considerations. His patriotism kept him steady, among temptations that were the ruin of Henry Fox. A mere comfortable place was not what he required; it would have been far easier for him to have come to terms with Newcastle than to have indulged in those terrific attacks that made the old wretch tremble in his shoes, but were mere madness from the point of view of the political schemer. Pitt's business was to save his country, and not to provide for himself.

He early established for himself a place in the affections of the people, to which no other statesman of his time could lay claim. George II was more right than he knew, when he talked of Pitt's having taught him to look for the sense of his people outside the House of Commons. Pitt was a national statesman, and his ideas of the nation were not bounded by the corrupt and narrow constituency of the House. He speaks with respect of the populace; "those whom gentlemen are pleased to call the mob," is the phrase of one of his earlier speeches. The strange magnetism that emanated from him, which made a

soldier politician sit down in confusion at his mere glance, and the Commons fear him as boys fear the schoolmaster, went out in sympathy to the people. Even before he had approved himself by deeds, they recognized that here was a man, and they agreed with him that he was the man to save England. When disaster threatened, and serious business was on hand, the cry for Pitt became irresistible, and when he proved unable to hold his ground among the placemen, "it rained gold boxes."

It was high time for a patriot statesman. England was humiliated, and might ere long be ruined; the incompetence of her leaders was revealed to the world. At last Pitt's character had matured, and his patriotism burned with a steady and intense flame that had nothing in it of the capricious or the sentimental. With the cosmopolitan theories that were weakening our enemy, he would have nothing to do. One of his letters to his nephew shows how little he, great orator as he was, was the dupe of a fine phrase. He thus comments on Ludlow's epitaph, that every land is a country to a brave man: "How dangerous is it to trust frail, corrupt man with such an aphorism! What fatal casuistry is it big with! How many a villain might, and has masked himself in the sayings of ancient illustrious exiles, while he was in fact dissolving all the nearest and dearest ties that hold societies together, and spurning at all laws divine and human!" Then comes a passage which shows how intimately patriotism and religion were connected in Pitt's mind, and how far he had advanced from the creedless cult of humanity of his early years. "If all soils are alike to the brave and virtuous, so may all churches and modes of worship: that is all will be equally neglected and violated. Instead of every soil being his country, he will have no one for his country; he will be the forlorn outcast of mankind." In such a frame of mind did the saviour of England enter upon his task.

One of his first measures, upon coming into power, was to raise two thousand Highlanders; for, as he said, no better troops could be found for the American War. This wise and politic step (which had been suggested years before by Argyll and already put into practice on a small scale) went far towards making the union between England and Scotland real. The Scots were regarded by most Englishmen of Pitt's time as an alien and inferior people. The Scottish Members of Parliament were notoriously venal, and much irritation was caused to honest and dishonest Englishmen by the number of lucrative posts that went to the Scots. The 'forty-five rebellion raised this hatred to a fever-heat, though, to do them justice, Englishmen were united in execration of the "Butcher Cumberland." Fielding's "True Patriot" gives lively expression to anti-Scottish sentiment, in an imaginary description of a Scottish conquest of London, with its accompaniment of robbery, rape and murder; a little boy who touched a plaid of one of the new life-guards promptly contracted the itch! Scotsmen were the constant butt of Dr. Johnson's wit and rudeness, and when, at the beginning of George III's reign, Lord Bute enjoyed a short lease of power, such was the nation's resentment that even Cumberland became popular. The vitriolic pen of Wilkes was freely employed in denouncing all things Scottish, and Churchill's "Prophecy of Famine," which is dedicated to Wilkes, is as savage as, though much less amusing than "Lillibullero." In Hugh Kelly's "Babler," we have in a dictionary of political phrases, like Mr. Punch's of a later date, a definition of arrogance and presumption as, "the smallest dissent from the opinion of an insolent Scot"; of scandal and detraction as, "a regard for the name of Englishman and an aversion to the itch." Thus Pitt's device of employing Highland troops in the British service, while brilliantly successful from a military point of view, was also profoundly statesman-

like. The union of hearts was not to be accomplished all at once, but the common glory of Quebec went far towards effacing the memories of Culloden; and the breaking the power of the clans, and the disappearance of Jacobitism from politics, helped to bridge over the transition.

Pitt was also our first great imperialist statesman. His first political efforts had been in opposition to the arrogance of imperial Spain, and from the very first he was opposed to an insular or personal foreign policy, as typified by that of Carteret. But as soon as he gets his hand upon the reins of power, wider schemes begin to occupy his mind. He has now no objection to Continental war, even to Hanoverian subsidies, provided that he can make them subservient to his larger purpose of conquering America in Germany. The attacks on the French coast, that "broke windows with guineas," and have incurred the censure even of modern critics, were part and parcel of a great strategic scheme. It did not much matter whether we won or lost, provided that we could keep France occupied at home, and divert her energies from America.

Equally bold was his policy in respect of Spain. He would not have waited for her to declare war, but would have crippled her before she was able to strike a blow. Even when lesser men had thwarted his plans, and driven him from office, the richest possessions of our new opponent fell almost automatically into our hands, to be bartered away by what we can only describe as gross and culpable folly, if by no worse name. There is a sort of telepathy by which genius communicates itself, and there is something almost uncanny about the way in which the fire and energy of Pitt communicated itself to every subordinate. We know how Wolfe, dining with Pitt before his departure for America, was so carried away by his eloquence that he strode about with drawn sword, calling himself Hannibal and Cæsar, to the qualified dismay of his host. The red tape, which had restrained the

military virtue of British officers, was snapped, as though by magic, and it seemed as if they drank, from some miraculous spring, the waters of invincibility. And this was just between the age of Johnnie Cope and Byng, and that of Gage and General Howe.

We have already seen, in the case of Shakespeare, how far removed is the poetic temperament from anything unmanly or unpractical. Hardly less remarkable than the sweep and boldness of Pitt's imagination is his command of detail. Like all great organizers of victory, he made it his care to leave nothing to chance. Lord John Russell relates the story of how, on one occasion, Pitt was determined that the fleet should set out by the next Tuesday. The Board of Admiralty pointed out that this was impossible. Pitt declared his intention of getting another Board. Next Tuesday that fleet was on the high seas. Not that he did not make mistakes. At one time he would have perpetrated the colossal blunder of giving up Gibraltar, an injury that would have put even Newcastle's performances into the shade. He showed a somewhat imperfect appreciation of the possibilities of our Indian Empire, in his reply to Clive. The Company might conquer Bengal, he said, but only the unique genius of a Clive would be able to keep it. His Hanoverian policy, too, seems to have been of tardy development in his mind; he was at first inclined to have neglected Hanover altogether; though afterwards he brilliantly realized the policy of conquering America in Germany.

But making allowance for all this, we cannot withhold our reverence and admiration from his constant faculty of detecting, and doing, the right thing, and the only right thing. His American policy during the Seven Years' War is an instance of this. It was the supreme issue, to which all others were subservient. "The long injured, long forgotten, long neglected people of America," was the language he used in recalling to Ministers the real

object of the war upon which they had embarked. Not less remarkable is the way in which he cut the knot of the American problem, by striking first at Louisbourg, then at Quebec. The policy of cutting off Spain from her treasure-supply, while seizing her richest possessions, also emanated from him, though he did not remain in office to carry it out.

But perhaps most important of all, was his realization of the value of sea power. About this he never wavered, even when, at the end of the Austrian Succession War, he was ready to recant upon the question of the Hanoverian subsidies, and the right of search. He warmly supported the raising of our naval force to fifty thousand men, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War; and as fervently regretted their previous reduction to eight thousand. He trembled to think of the danger we ran, and when he came into office, such was his appreciation of the value of sea power, that he not only thwarted every scheme of invasion, and nearly isolated the French in America, but almost swept the opposing fleets from the sea.

Pitt, then, was our first great imperialist statesman; but we must remember that, in his day, Englishmen had a very different notion of empire from our modern ideas. Trade, rather than territory, was the great object. We have seen to what an extent the policy of the earlier eighteenth century was governed by commercial considerations, and how even poetry and literature were saturated with the grossest financial materialism. This was even more the case in England than in France, owing to the influence of the moneyed interest, the merchants and financiers. The French *noblesse* was certainly being weakened by the inclusion of *nouveaux riches*, but this tendency did not operate powerfully enough to prevent foreign and military policy from centring round dynastic aims and Continental aggrandizement, and thus

Montcalm and Lally were left without support in the hour of their need.

But it is a mistake to say that England conquered by her materialism. It was our materialism that lost us America, but it was Pitt who had conquered it. In 1739, the "patriot" outcry for war with Spain was certainly sordid enough, but then the war against Spain was as feeble and futile as such sordid ventures must ever be, even though graced by the youthful enthusiasm of a Pitt. The Seven Years' War was a more serious matter. Pitt certainly did not despise trade, it was his boast that he had made commerce flourish by means of war. As far back as 1739 he had laid it down that, "When trade is at stake, it is your last retrenchment, you must defend it or perish." But then, he was far from being enslaved by material considerations. His mind both embraced and transcended the ideas of his time. First among his motives was, as we have seen, the pure, abstract ideal of patriotism. Like Nelson, he loved England and he hated France. We have no reason to doubt his sincerity, when he passionately reminded Ministers how they had gone to war in the interests of American colonists—he did not say American trade. This may serve to elucidate the comparative neglect he showed towards Indian affairs at this time. For he must have realized the vast possibilities of Indian trade. But the English colonists in America were after all a people in themselves, and stood on quite another footing to the few settlements of the East India Company. Yet Pitt is not free from blame in respect of the colonists. Despite his championship of their interests at a later date, he had contributed in some degree to producing the state of things he sought to remedy. He had not Walpole's easy faculty of conniving at breaches of the law. The Molasses Act, which was designed to restrict commercial intercourse with the French West Indies, had been passed under Walpole's

auspices, but experience taught him that it was best to wink at its infraction. Pitt's circular of 1760 was designed to end this state of things, and hence to provoke the sensitive resentment of the colonists. It was characteristic of Pitt to scorn anything in the nature of subterfuge, but in this case it would have been wiser for him to have condescended to the tactics of Gallio. He was intensely serious in his belief in an imperial fiscal union, under the control of the Mother Country, and hence his boast, perhaps the most unfortunate thing he ever said, that not a nail on a horseshoe should be manufactured in the colonies without the consent of England. The idea of his policy was splendid, but his apprehension of the facts was imperfect. George Grenville only followed to a pedantic conclusion the example of his great kinsman.

French sentiment towards England was of a very different nature from English sentiment towards France at this time. There flourished in Paris, in the hour of France's deepest humiliation, a mawkish Anglomania. But British popular sentiment towards France was constant, from the days of "Lewis Baboon" to those of "Boney." Exquisites like Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield were, of course, above such prejudices, and the drawing-rooms of London took their tone, to a certain extent, from the salons of Paris. But even among the educated class, the Frenchman met with scant appreciation. Whenever Hogarth essays to draw one of them, he seems to have dipped his pen in venom; his Frenchmen are simply caricatures, starved, affected, frog-eating, priest-ridden and bigoted. Dr. Johnson, who believed that all foreigners were fools, did not love the French. Their loquaciousness, their servility and consequent credulity, and their filthy habits, even in the highest circles, excited his contempt. He refused, on his tour in France, so much as to speak their language. As for Voltaire and Rousseau, he found it difficult to settle

the proportion of iniquity between them. Such instances of love for France, as that of the Jacobite nobleman in "Tom Jones," who hailed with joy the supposed arrival of twenty thousand honest Frenchmen on our shores, may be taken as isolated. Among the lower class hatred and contempt for the French were universal. In 1753 there was an outcry against the Jews which took the form of "No Jews, no wooden shoes," the "wooden shoes" being the Huguenot immigrants. Mr. Herz, in his book on "The Old Colonial System," says of the beginning of the Seven Years' War: "It was then the vogue to pelt all foreigners in London with dead cats on Lord Mayor's Day, and now the mob, assuming in addition that all foreigners were Frenchmen, hurled the old epithet of 'French dog' at every stranger." Later still we have in "Sandford and Merton" the instance of the poor and virtuous little boy, who received a present of fine clothes, and was taunted by his playmates with looking like a Frenchman.

Pitt's mind was steeped in this hatred for France. If he had had his way, he would have crushed and humiliated her beyond the possibility of recovery. Though he rejoiced when the colonists resisted our rule, yet at the advent of France into the field, all his warlike energy blazed up, and he was for fighting to the last. It was his sympathy that made his genius so irresistible. He had the innate faculty for seizing upon some crude popular sentiment, and turning it to advantage. Here he resembles such statesmen as Pericles and Demosthenes. He could lead the people, because he was always in close and passionate communion with them. Thus the hatred of France represented a profound truth, that the masses had grasped, but were unable to formulate. They recognized who was their real enemy, and with whom it behoved us to struggle to the death. And here Pitt placed himself at the head of the same masses, whom he was ready to oppose

in the case of Byng. It was his pride to have seen beyond the courtiers and borough mayors, to have stood for the nation, and not for any class or faction, not even for the House of Commons. He was the first of his time to see, and avail himself of, the tremendous engine of popular sentiment. And here he was a democratic statesman, as distinguished from a demagogue like Wilkes; for he did not become the slave of the popular will, but guided and bent it to the ends of his country.

It is in this connection that we have to notice one feature of his career that may make some of his actions seem strange to us of the twentieth century. His patriotism was blended with a passionate love of liberty in the abstract, in which he approached near to Bolingbroke, to whom the word patriot denoted less one who sustains the glory of his country abroad than one who preserves her liberties at home. This explains why, in the early stages of his career, Pitt was such an opponent of standing armies, and why he attached such importance to the inefficient and nearly useless militia. So much, indeed, was his patriotism imbued with this idea, that he would have preferred to see us beaten rather than impose an unjust yoke on the colonists. "If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a single foreign troop was landed on my shores, I would never lay down my arms—never! never! never!" It was the same cause that made him practically a Home Ruler in the case of Ireland. Unfortunately, he did not find this attitude inconsistent with the advocacy of vexatious fiscal arrangements, as between England and the colonies.

But the genius of Pitt was premature, and the latter part of his career is somewhat of an anticlimax. The forces of corruption and infidelity were not to be shattered all at once. A slow and silent change was taking place all through the latter part of the eighteenth century, and Pitt only anticipated its effects. The emotional impulse,

that was to break up the Prose Age, was gaining strength, until it was ready to blossom forth in the period of Romance.

Meanwhile the clouds, which his genius had parted for a moment, closed again over England. In the twenty dismal years that followed our triumph, we reaped the full harvest of our materialism, and all the while new forces, which were to make us glorious again, were gathering beneath the surface. The historian of patriotism has little concern, except in the negative sense, with the factions and cabals that make up the political history of George III's early years. Never had monarch such an opportunity, and never was an opportunity thrown away with more excellent intentions. For George was neither a fool nor a bad man. As a politician, in the sense of getting his own way and dishing his opponents, he was as consummate a master of the game as Charles II, without any of the vices that disgraced his merry predecessor. He was possessed of a homely and never-failing shrewdness, which made him an effective critic of his Ministers; while, if he had not genius, he had at least an infinite capacity for taking pains. Physically, as well as morally, he was as brave a king as ever sat upon a throne; he was unmoved alike when the glass panels of his coach were being smashed, and when North was wringing his hands over the defeat of Yorktown. Once he had adopted a principle, nothing would induce him to swerve from it. Finally, whatever the blood that ran in his veins, he was by upbringing and choice an Englishman; he gloried, he said, in the name of Briton, and according to his lights he was a patriot, though he once talked, in a temporary fit of despondency, about retiring to Hanover.

Yet this excellent man succeeded in doing far more harm to his country than had been accomplished by a John Lackland or a Bloody Mary. We have to thank him for the loss of our American Empire, and almost certainly

for the Irish ulcer that has baffled our statesmanship ever since his day. It was his obstinacy that brought down the venerable head of Chatham with sorrow to the grave, and his scheming that produced some of the most disgraceful episodes in the politics even of the eighteenth century. It is the old story of lack of imagination. George III was not wicked, but he was hopelessly narrow, he could only see the formal aspect of a problem, and he was as blind to the main issues as Charles I. But unlike Charles, he succeeded, on the whole, in retaining the affections of his subjects.

He was, indeed, such a king as Englishmen like. He was not too clever to put him above the level of his subjects, nor too dignified for their sympathy. He was, in fact, Farmer George, and he possessed a good many of the qualities of substantial farmers we meet every day in the home counties. He was a lover of exercise and the open air, he was a sportsman in his way, and his plain and unsentimental morality marked him off in sharp contrast from the brilliant rakes who surrounded him. He started with a number of prejudices, and was as obstinate and untractable as any mule in their defence. He was possessed of a shrewdness which was invincible within the circle of these prejudices, but never soared to any grand conception. For what is known as culture he had a healthy distrust, and his remark about Shakespeare being sorry stuff, though one must not say so, did him little harm with plain John Bull. In this farmer's blend of common sense and pig-headedness, of plainness and cunning, and above all in his absolute fearlessness, he was able to acquire a popularity among a nation that cared little for a Burke, and detested a Castlereagh. Farmer George never realized that this popularity, which he finally established, almost in spite of his conscious self, was his most formidable weapon, if he had only chosen to wield it. He had been brought up under

the influence of Bolingbroke, who, though one of the most unpopular Englishmen who ever lived, at least recognized the value of what he never attained. It is an entire mistake to imagine that George III's policy was that of Bolingbroke's Patriot King in action. Formally, he may have adopted some of the dry bones of its teaching, but its spirit he never realized at all. The idea of Bolingbroke's Toryism was, we know, that the King should take his proper place as the head of the nation, and in the name, and with the support of his whole people, break the factions, the great corrupt Houses and the Whig interests, and become the true leader of a reunited England.

A matchless opportunity presented itself for the accomplishment of this high ambition. The influence of the Houses had been shaken to its foundations by the breakdown of Newcastle's system in a time of national emergency. The voice of the people had made itself heard, the hero of the people was borne triumphantly into power, and England achieved a glory more splendid than any of Marlborough's winning. It was open to the young George to take full advantage of this state of affairs. A greater than Bolingbroke was at hand to carry out his policy, a man devotedly, nay, romantically loyal, one contemptuous of the baser side of politics, crowned with victory, and secure in the affections of the nation. A combination of George III and Pitt must have been irresistible, at home and abroad; France and Spain could have been brought to their knees; America secured for ever, and the dominance of a few corrupt magnates shattered. In the latter part of Chatham's career he became frankly contemptuous of the ordinary party divisions, and his policy of strengthening the counties at the expense of the boroughs was as frankly Tory as anything accomplished by his son.

Farmer George was constitutionally unable to soar

where Chatham was sitting. He preferred being clever to being great, and set himself to fight the Whig Houses with their own weapons. For such a task he was perfectly fitted, by nature and circumstance. He was the most accomplished of caucus-mongers, but the land is in an evil case, whose king is a party boss. The domestic history of his early years, to his final defeat of the Fox-North Coalition, is a story that has been often told, and does not need to be told again. Hardly was George on the throne, than he showed what line he meant to take. He began by breaking Chatham for the sake of a well-meaning, inconsiderable Scottish lord; he followed this up by a peace, that threw away some of the brightest fruits of the war, and made an enemy of our most important ally. Then commenced a war, as keen as that of the Seven Years, between the King's friends and the King's enemies within his realm. George triumphed. He formed a party, based upon no principle but corruption, ready to sell their honour and their country for such secret gold as could be extracted from the royal coffers.

It is worse than idle to adopt the cant of those who would have it that George ought to have thrown himself passively into the hands of the Whigs, and allowed their nominees to govern in his name, in the good old Pelham way. This standpoint can claim the sanction of a greater even than Macaulay, for Edmund Burke adopted it in his earlier works. Too truly was it said of that wonderful man, that he gave up to party what was meant for mankind, if for mankind we be allowed to substitute his country. Burke's "Thoughts upon the Present Discontents" show, with the most philosophic lucidity, to what a state the nation had been reduced; how contemptible we had become in the eyes of Europe, when our very ambassadors might be countermined by their own master; how the state was honeycombed with corruption under the direct sanction of the King; and finally we have

the case for party government, inspired by principles, and reposing upon the consent of the people. The word "people" is, in fact, constantly upon Burke's lips, and the impression one gleans from his argument is, that the Whigs were high-souled democrats, to whom faction was odious, and corruption anathema.

But however bad the King's policy might have been, the Whigs were the last people who had any right to reproach him. They were heirs of the Pelham system, and the short administration, which Burke was at such pains to eulogize, included the Duke of Newcastle. Nay, Burke himself, who towered above the rest of his party in genius, could not, poor Commoner as he was, attain to more than a subordinate office, after his long years of faithful service. This is the tragedy of Burke's life, that only at the very end of his career could he shake himself free from the trammels of a faction which ignored his philosophy and undervalued his services. He could expose corruption, but he never dared go to the root of it, and he would talk of the rotten boroughs as if they were invested with the sanctity of the British Constitution. He grew almost hysterical in his opposition to the young Pitt's scheme of reform. Cut the King's claws? Perhaps! But destroy the power of the magnates? Unthinkable!

Even the power of a Chatham is a small thing, in his eyes, compared with that of the Pelhams and Rockinghams. "The power of that gentleman was vast indeed and merited; but it was in a great degree personal, and therefore transient. Theirs was rooted in the country, for, with a great deal less of popularity, they possessed a far more natural and fixed influence. Long possession of government; vast property; obligations of favours given and received; connection of office. . . ." These are the sentiments of a party hack, tempering the sublimity of a Plato. And, again, in speaking of the

influence possessed by peers, he contends that it is impossible and wrong to prevent it, seeing that property is power. Thus, almost in the same breath, Burke is denouncing corruption by a king, and defending it, by implication, when employed by a great lord. It is no wonder that George had little to fear from an eloquence so palpably mortgaged to faction.

It was upon the baseness of eighteenth-century politics that the King built his system. In the period following the Seven Years' War, the condition of the governing class became worse, if possible, than before. It was a time, when the Hell Fire Club supplied Ministers of State; when gambling was less of an amusement than a disease; when vice flaunted all its evil, and most of its grossness, in the light of day. The last thing that seemed to occur to the average politician was that the country had to be provided for. Monstrous and irretrievable blunders were perpetrated, as minor incidents in the game of office. It was not strange that the bottom fell out of the *Royal George;* that in distant seas the English ships were driven away, and Cornwallis isolated at Yorktown; when the man responsible for our naval administration was no less a rogue than Jemmy Twitcher.

The corruption is partly to be ascribed to material causes. The Seven Years' War had caused money to flow into the country, and already the first stirrings of the Industrial Revolution were perceptible. But at present, the greatest fortunes were made in commerce, and obscure scions of the middle class found a golden path into the privileged ring that had usurped the lordship of the community. India was a happy hunting-ground for these adventurers, and not only peers, but nabobs, were able to appoint the representatives of the English people. The Whig deification of property—for, in this regard, Burke only filled in, with glowing colours, the bare outlines of Locke—was naturally calculated to

aggravate the grossly unpopular nature of eighteenth-century government.

And yet, this is the very period when men of all parties united, with one consent, in glorifying the Constitution. Not only at home, but abroad, was this the fashion. Montesquieu, whose book on the " Spirit of the Laws " is perhaps the supreme example of that facile brilliancy which was the mark of French philosophy before the Revolution, eulogized it in terms that showed his serene ignorance of its actual working. The fathers of the American Constitution, though naturally better informed than the Frenchman, copied from its theory in a way that frequently contradicted its practice. King George was as obstinate as any one in its defence. He called it the most beautiful combination that ever was framed. " If I had the powers of oratory of Demosthenes or the pen of an Addison," he writes, " I can say no more on the subject than I can convey in the following few lines: that I am conscious, if Lord North will resolve with spirit to continue in his present employment, that with the assistance of Parliament, I shall be able to keep the Constitution in its pristine lustre." Chatham and Burke were prodigal of their eloquence in this same cause.

The worship of the Constitution found its high priest in Blackstone. His Commentaries on our law, of which the first volume appeared in 1765, form one of the most deservedly important books in our language. Blackstone worshipped the law with an ardour as intense as that of Coke; but instead of the crabbed and labyrinthine erudition of Coke upon Lyttleton, he gave us a prose epic of the law, written in beautiful and limpid English, and addressed, not to specialists, but to the general body of citizens, with the object, in Blackstone's own words, of instructing " the rising generation in the wisdom of our civil polity, and informing them with a desire to be still better acquainted with the laws and institutions of our

country." Blackstone approaches his task with the ardour, and something of the blindness of a lover. His four volumes are one long panegyric, and the reader can scarcely help being carried along by the author's own enthusiasm; the law, which once appeared so harsh and tedious, takes on the form of a beautiful and beneficent genius, the embodiment of God's own justice, standing between him and every sort of injustice and tyranny.

Nor was this worship wholly false and mischievous, as the Benthams and Austins of a later generation, men without a tithe of Blackstone's learning or genius, were to maintain. Let us grant that they were right, in showing how profound a gulf separated the reality of Eldon from the vision of Blackstone. But the great commentator was at heart a poet, and saw with a poet's vision past the accretions, with which our law had been overlaid and almost stifled, to its essence and idea; past what it was, to what, however darkly and imperfectly, it was trying to be. Such men as Blackstone evoke the spirit they describe, and his free and noble conception of our law, and our Constitution, has set up a standard, alike for lawyers and citizens, that has not been without its effect on the framing of legislation, and the administration of justice, and, still more, in confirming and purifying the love of Englishmen for England.

His concluding words are a perfect summary of his book and its message. "It hath been the endeavour of these commentaries, however the execution may have succeeded, to examine its [the Constitution's] solid foundations, to mark out its extensive plan, to explain the use and distribution of its parts, and from the harmonious concurrence of these several parts to demonstrate the elegant proportion of the whole. We have taken occasion to admire at every turn the noble monuments of antient simplicity, and the more curious refinements of modern art. Nor have its faults been concealed from view; for

faults it has, lest we should be tempted to think it of more than a human structure; defects, chiefly arising from the decays of time, or the rage of unskilful improvements in later ages. To sustain, to repair, to beautify this noble pile, is a charge intrusted principally to the nobility, and such gentlemen of the kingdom, as are delegated by their country to parliament. The protection of THE LIBERTY OF BRITAIN is a duty which they owe to themselves, who enjoy it; to their ancestors, who transmitted it down; and to their posterity, who will claim at their hands this, the best birthright and noblest inheritance of mankind."

However much we may criticize the contradictions and confused thinking that underlay too much of this Constitution-worship, we must at least acknowledge it to be no small evidence of patriotism. It was all-important that Englishmen, whatever might be their particular grievances, believed that they were a favoured nation as compared with the slaves of the Continent; that their rights were things to be recovered and not discovered. This was to be our strength and our salvation, in the struggle against revolutionary France.

But the Constitution of an island, crippled as it was by corruption and incompetence, proved itself inadequate to support the burden of empire. Though the first of our statesmen was both a great commoner and a great imperialist, the conceptions of liberty and empire did not generally march together. Even in his case, they were brought into conflict during the American War. After that war there was a decline in imperial sentiment. We may roughly distinguish between the two chief periods of English imperialism, that of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and that of the last quarter of the nineteenth, by describing the former as swayed by the principles of sovereignty, the latter by those of a free federation, at any rate as regards white men. Chatham

and Burke looked further than those they strove to lead, the most enlightened thought of the time was working for freedom at home and abroad, but there was a dead weight of national prejudice that was unable to adjust itself to the entirely new conception of a free empire. It was an idea almost without precedent. There had indeed been empires in the past, but these had reposed upon the conception of a central and absolute power. There might be such disturbing factors as too powerful satraps, or mutinous governors of provinces, but these were obstacles to be removed, and not normal members of the system. Then there had been the colonial enterprise of the Greek cities, but these colonies had detached themselves from the parent city, like the young of certain primitive animals, and become separate communities. There had been an attempt to found something like a free empire in the Confederacy of Delos, but even Athens was not able to sacrifice her lust for power, and the confederacy soon became a means of draining the coffers of the allies for the benefit of the chief city. The Middle Ages were generally despised by the men of the eighteenth century, but it is here that some precedent might have been found for the new idea of the British Empire. There is, in Dante's political treatise " De Monarchia," a distinct conception of " Imperium et Libertas." True, Dante is sketching the plan of an empire that should embrace the whole world, and not one that must exist in competition with other powers. But one of the foremost benefits of such a world State, as he conceives it, is that the greatest possible amount of freedom will be secured to the component parts, the rulers in every case being held to be the servants of the people. Different peoples will require different laws, to suit their special circumstances; there must be unity of principle, difference in application. The parallel must not be pushed too far, for it is only in spirit, and in vague and uncertain

outline, that Dante foreshadows the ideal of modern imperialism. We doubt if any modern statesman has gone to his book for political instruction.

The idea of a free empire was, then, something new to the men of the eighteenth century. Contemporary, as well as ancient, precedent pointed the other way. The colonies of France and Spain had been in absolute dependence upon the central power. It required the insight of genius to see that a new problem had to be faced. The Spanish Empire had been the ruin of Spain, and the French Colonial Empire had proved a failure and humiliation. The precedent of Rome and the ancient empires no longer applied, because these were land powers, usually ruling over inferior peoples, who could be controlled from a centre. But in the case of the American colonies, we had to deal with men of the same blood as ourselves, and fired by an equal passion for liberty. We were separated from them by enormous distances, so that we could not hope to hold them in permanent subjection against their will. The situation was one that required insight and sympathetic imagination, and this was just what the counsellors of George III had not got. The Farmer King viewed the situation from a standpoint which, though fatally wrong, was by no means ignoble, and was as nearly as possible that of the average plain Englishman. He was for the strong hand and firm measures, and he endorsed the view of one of his generals, that the colonials would be lions or lambs, according to the concession or firmness of the Government at home. The colonists had been governed mildly and reasonably, and to stand nonsense from rebels would be a shameful dereliction of duty on the part of the sovereign. It was natural and human to think thus, and George was wedded to the notion of duty. It is false to assert, with a certain eminent historian, that the King regarded the loss of America in the same light as the landowner regards

the curtailment of his estate. On the contrary, he was convinced that the honour and the very existence of the empire depended upon the successful issue of the war. He never appears to better advantage than when he harps upon this string. "I feel the justness of our cause," he writes to Lord North, "I feel the greatest confidence in the valour of both navy and army, and, above all, in the assistance of Divine Providence. The moment is certainly anxious and the die is now cast whether this shall continue a great empire, or the least dignified of all the European States. The object is certainly worth struggling for, and I trust the nation is equally determined with myself to await the conclusion with firmness." This man may have been stupid and narrow, but he had a heart not unworthy a King of England.

> "The sun set, but not his hope,
> Stars rose, his faith was earlier up."

What a contrast to the man he honoured with his confidence and authority during these bitter years, and who afterwards betrayed him!

To understand the feelings of the plain, stolid Englishman, who could appreciate the obstinacy of King George better than the subtleties and passion of a Burke, we must go to the best and greatest of his kind, Samuel Johnson. Upon this question, he expressed himself in conversation, with more than his wonted violence. On one occasion, without the least provocation, he burst out in tones that, according to Boswell, might almost have been heard the other side of the Atlantic, "I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American.*" He then roared out that they were rascals, robbers and pirates, and that he would burn and destroy them.

He approaches the subject more coolly in his pamphlet, "Taxation no Tyranny," which inspired the more popular treatise of Wesley. He had, we have seen, an insular conception of patriotism, and a consequent

contempt for the colonies. He will have it that the only gainers by the Seven Years' War were the colonists themselves. Their grievances are all shams, and they have no more right to secede, or to tax themselves, than Cornwall. The claim that any portion of the State may fix for itself how much it shall contribute to the whole, is preposterous upon the face of it. As for non-representation, the Americans have resigned their right of voting by emigration, "and what they have voluntarily quitted they have no right to claim." Besides, "all government is ultimately and essentially absolute . . . in sovereignty there are no gradations," thus it is just as right to tax the colonies as it is to impose upon them other laws which they have never disputed. "When they are reduced to obedience," he finally exclaims, "may that obedience be secured by stricter laws and stronger obligations." For not to punish rebels, is to encourage rebellion.

Johnson was no lover of violent measures for their own sake. He hated war as much as Swift and Voltaire. There was, in 1770, a dispute with Spain about the Falkland Islands, which threw the whole country into a mood as bellicose as that evoked in our own day by the vagaries of the Baltic Fleet. The Spaniards had the insolence to oust an English garrison in time of peace, and to remove the rudder of an English warship. The war fever was fed by the eloquence of the mysterious Junius. But Johnson, who despised Junius as an unprincipled agitator, penned an earnest and touching appeal for peace. Such questions as the honour of the flag were, to him, unprofitable abstractions, compared with the real horrors of war. To bring misery and suffering upon thousands, because of a barren island and the rudder of a ship, seemed to Johnson's honest mind the height of wickedness.

For all his John Bullishness, Johnson's attitude towards the Americans, and, in fact, that of the English people, was essentially un-English. The main principles

of the Constitution were quite clear to the majority of our countrymen, as far as domestic politics were concerned, but they lacked, as yet, the imagination to extend them to their fellow-citizens beyond the seas. Johnson's contention was, that the Americans had, of their own free choice and domicile, put themselves in a position of subjection, which meant, in effect, that whereas Englishmen were to be governed by English principles, Americans were to be governed by those of Rome. And here comes the crux of imperialism, whether our empire is to be conceived of as a sovereign and insular power, giving the law to her tributaries, or as a federation of free States, jealously retentive of their rights and individualities. There can be no doubt which of these is the more conformable with the spirit of Magna Carta and the British Constitution.

It was in this spirit that Chatham pleaded the cause of America. He reposed his case, not upon abstract rights, but upon the constitutional rights of Englishmen. These rights were, to Chatham, something more than forms; they were based upon principles inherent in the English character, and approved by the wisdom of ages; principles which, after the loss of America, were to become the recognized basis of a free imperialism. "Had the British Colonies been planted by any other kingdom than our own, the inhabitants would have carried with them the chains of slavery and the spirit of despotism; but as they are, they ought to be remembered as great instances to instruct the world what great exertions mankind will naturally make, when they are left to the free exercise of their own powers."

The Americans were justified in their resistance, because they were fighting the battle of the Constitution, fighting not only for themselves, but for the liberties of all Englishmen. "The spirit which now resists your taxation in America is the same which formerly opposed loans,

benevolences, and ship-money, in England: the same spirit which called all England on its legs, and by the Bill of Rights vindicated the English Constitution: the same spirit which established the great, fundamental and essential maxim of our liberties, that no subject should be taxed except by his own consent." So strongly was he imbued with the worship of our liberties, that he believed our victory would be synonymous with our ruin. "America, if she falls, will fall like the strong man, she will embrace the pillars of the State, and pull down the Constitution along with her." Chatham was right, and profoundly right, in his perception that a British Empire must be founded on British principles; that not dominion, but liberty, must be its watchword. In invoking, as he did, the spirit and not the form of the English Constitution, he was heralding the Imperium et Libertas of the next century.

This spirit of reason and conciliation, which Chatham opposed to the crude passion of popular fury, was characteristic also of Burke. Over the question of America he is seen to better advantage than when he is pronouncing upon domestic politics. Here, at least, he had no temptation to suppress the truth in the cause of party, nor were there any great Houses and rotten boroughs to be whitewashed. Burke may not have understood how much there was to be urged against the colonists in the concrete, for they were very far from being injured innocents, but the main outlines of the situation he sketched with a master hand, and it is pleasing to observe the sanity and spiritual insight with which he unravels the maze in which even the greatest of his countrymen had gone astray. Chatham argued the case like a constitutional lawyer, we had no *right* to tax Americans, because they were unrepresented. We should be taxing Ireland next! But to Burke these were only forms. Right or no right, we could not essay to conquer, by force of arms, a people who by

ancestry, religion and situation were naturally steeped in the idea and pride of freedom. We could not hold them down by force, nor ought we so to do. There is a delicacy about Burke's idealism which shows him to be rather the first-born of a new generation than a true son of the eighteenth century. His style is often pompous, and trammelled by a false convention, but between the rocks the mountain torrent of his thought flows pure and deep. Despite the materialism of his time, he felt himself to be moving among spiritual forces and unseen influences, and thus his passionate plea that England and America should be united by a spiritual, rather than a legal or physical, bond is prophetic of the new and distinctively English idea of a free empire. A modern statesman who should speak of the bond "thinner than gossamer yet stronger than steel" that unites us to our colonies, would only voice the sentiment of millions; but in Burke's time such an idea was hardly inconceivable. Even in his case, and in that of Chatham, the cult of commerce was strong enough to prevent idealism from being pushed to all its consequences. Both men maintained the curious distinction between internal and external taxation; the Motherland might not levy taxes, but she might, without blame, levy tribute on trade.

Here steps in Adam Smith, a philosopher of a very different calibre from Burke. The fine frenzy of the Irishman is in sharp contrast with the analysis and keen business instincts of the Lowland Scot. And yet both men were fighting in the same cause, and travelling by different paths towards a common goal. Adam Smith views the question, not from the heights of idealism, but from the lower standpoint of profit and loss. He has a robust and cheery outlook upon life; a sound digestion, a fat pocket and a clear conscience are all he wants from Heaven. His patriotism is sturdy and genuine, but calculating, and tempered by a distrust for Utopias; while

universal benevolence seems to him more the affair of God than of man. God is, to employ Adam Smith's own image, a good General, Who can be trusted to look after the grand strategy of His universe. This doctrine is but the divine harmony of Shaftesbury, Pope, Hutcheson, and so many of the eighteenth-century philosophers, and corresponds to Kant's idea, that the individual will is free, but that the collective will is determinate. The economics of Adam Smith are closely connected with his philosophy.

Thus it comes about that Adam Smith was ready to go further than either Burke or Chatham in the matter of colonial trade. He did not concern himself so much with the legality or justice of the restrictions as with the fact that they were useless. A great deal of ingenuity has been wasted in showing how other men had attacked the mercantile system before Adam Smith. But it was he who first pushed the attack home, and that is his great title to fame. No genius springs, like Pallas Athene, helmeted and armed from the head of Zeus, it must find materials ready to its hand. The question that Adam Smith put to his countrymen was, " Is it worth while injuring ourselves, our colonies, and the whole human race, for the benefit of a small set of producers ? " He tacitly assumes that if the State (within certain limits) leaves well alone, God will take over the management of affairs, and selfishness and greed will be ministering angels in His scheme of ordering all things for the happiness of mankind. This curious sort of mysticism we shall find recurring very frequently in modern times, and perhaps Bastiat in France and Herbert Spencer in England have been its most naïve exponents.

Adam Smith's opinions on the question of American taxation form a landmark in the development of imperial thought. His advocacy of liberty leads him to put forward a definite scheme of imperial federation. He sees

how useless it is to tax the colonies either directly, or indirectly through their assemblies. But there is no reason why they should not be represented in the Imperial Parliament, even though, in the course of time, this might lead to the shifting of government from England to America; for Adam Smith saw plainly how the daughter nation would one day surpass us in numbers and resources. Here we have a conception of imperialism in which the empire is allowed absolutely to dwarf the old patriotism. No wonder that the two most important events of history are, to Adam Smith, the voyage of Columbus and that of Vasco da Gama.

Such were the influences working in favour of a patriotism, and an imperialism, founded upon freedom. As yet they were but as voices crying in the wilderness, and the bulk of the nation were inclined to follow Lord North and King George rather than Burke. It is a characteristic of the eighteenth century that so many of the most sensitive and thoughtful spirits are to be found pulling against the current of their time. Even Chatham died in a minority.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DAWN OF ROMANCE

EVEN at the nadir of the eighteenth century, amid the clumsy tyranny of the Pelhams and the gloomy prognostications of seeing men, some light might have been detected streaking the clouds, some promise of a new dawn. What was Chatham himself but such a promise; the forerunner, the living pledge, of England's resurrection? All over Europe there was a shaking, as of the dry bones in the valley; those who observed the signs of the times did not fail to mark the omens, only half understood, of an impending crisis. Perhaps no event has had so many prophets as the French Revolution.

We must distinguish between two tendencies, as different, and yet as complementary, as positive and negative currents of electricity, and therefore apt to be confused. Before the eaglet of romance (if thus we may be permitted to speak of the new spiritual renaissance) could burst through the hard shell of the eighteenth century, this hardness had to be dissolved in the acid of its own materialism. Indeed, there was one outstanding merit about the cold and ruthless reasoning that had cast its blight upon Europe; it was at least a moving and progressive force, even if that progress was not heavenwards. It did not stand still, like many a stately cult of the Orient, or like the pessimism that casts its dark shadow over the modern world. It is fearful indeed to reverence nothing,

but we may learn thereby to lose our regard for what is really contemptible, and to break the old tyrannous idols of our superstition. The cynicism that made possible the tyranny of a Newcastle or a Louis XV, also helped to destroy the authority upon which that tyranny was buttressed, to pave the way for reform in England and destruction in France. It is easy to show that few of the most violent of pre-Revolutionary extremists contemplated the orgies of Notre Dame, or the bloodshed of the Terror, but he who saps the foundations of a building must share in the responsibility for its fall. Voltaire believed in monarchy, he may even have believed in what he called God, but his laughter was crackling flame, which burnt up even the forms of loyalty and worship, and when the forms were burnt, what was left to the *Ancien Régime?*

Now we have seen something of the same kind at work in England, where Hume was loosening the foundations of thought and Mandeville those of morals, and the principles, for which men had formerly striven, had degenerated into catchwords. But there is a marked difference between the trend of thought in England and in France, which, as most Englishmen will believe, told in our favour. In France, the dissatisfaction with the old order was absolute and uncompromising. There was a last flicker of loyalty during Louis XV's illness at Metz, and the triumphs of Marshal Saxe shed a sunset glamour over the heritage of Le Roi Soleil, but the Seven Years' War left the monarchy naked to the attacks of its critics, which were all the more bitter because they proceeded by sarcasm and innuendo. Voltaire might laud the age of Louis XIV, but for that of his great-grandson he had only contempt. There was in France nothing corresponding to the " roast beef of old England," to the worship of the Constitution, and the opinion, however unreasonable, that an Englishman was not only a better man, but better

off than any foreigner. On the contrary, it was the habit in France itself to lend colour to English insularity by such eulogies as those of Montesquieu. Thus the attacks of our English reformers upon English abuses were more conservative, and less uncompromising, than those which heralded the Revolution. Seldom do we find them indulging in such bitter invectives against everything venerable as were common to the *philosophes*, and seldom, as yet, do we hear of such Utopian dreams as those of Condorçet, dreams whose realization implies a clean sweep of everything existing.

It was a good thing, after all, that, even amid the reality of tyranny, we preserved the forms of freedom. The Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights and the Glorious Revolution were accepted by most Englishmen as part of their natural inheritance, without too much critical inquiry into their present worth. The forms of popular election were religiously preserved, and the average freeholder was the last person to object to the opportunity for exchanging his vote for beer and bribes unlimited. Besides, the Government, up to the last quarter of the century, had a salutary and well-grounded fear of the mob. Even those who most despaired of England, appealed to precedent rather than to abstract ideals. The most bitter reproach of Chatham was couched in his sentence, "The Constitution at this moment stands violated!" and he appealed to our Political Bible of Magna Carta, Petition of Rights, and Bill of Rights. To restore the old liberties was the object of reformers, not to create new heavens and a new earth.

Yet there was more than a tincture of the spirit that turns aside from a world of which it has grown weary, with persiflage or indifference. Men loved little, because they had little faith. A Horace Walpole would contemplate national scandal and humiliation with a polite shrug of the shoulders; while the conduct of Gibbon, the grandest

unbeliever of them all, would excite our contempt, were it not that, by nature and circumstances, he was disqualified from playing a part more worthy our respect." He frankly confessed that he entered politics with neither patriotism nor ambition, and his letters display his indifference to anything more exalted than his comfortable billet at the Board of Trade. He who traced the fall of Rome was unmoved by England's humiliation, and the deadness of emotion, which made his fifteenth chapter the most stupendous of libels, prevented him from sympathizing with, or sharing in, the love of England.

If the spirit of Horace Walpole and Gibbon had prevailed, there is no doubt that England must have gone the way either of France or of Spain, of revolution or petrifaction. Luckily, Gibbon himself was the representative of an order fast yielding place to the new spirit of romance. As far back as the time of Sir Robert, the first stirrings of a spiritual revival might have been perceived, and Chatham embodied it as visibly as Rousseau himself. Its influence upon patriotism was vital, for only by giving back their souls to Englishmen was it possible to teach them any love for England more exalted than that which expressed itself in the dead cats hurled at foreigners on Lord Mayor's Day. Both at home and abroad its tendency was essentially constructive. The effect of the eighteenth-century rationalism was doubt, cynicism, earthiness, frigidity; its very dreamers were such formal creatures as Joseph II of Austria; but the apostles of romance, so far from sneering, took themselves with a seriousness that often defied humour. Voltaire could demonstrate in "Candide" the folly, and in "Micromegas" the insignificance of mankind; but it was for Rousseau to trumpet forth the stupendous conception of a man-god in chains. Voltaire had to invent a being of colossal dimensions, in order to see men like ants; Rousseau was on his knees to the first kitchen

slut. So, in England, a Horace Walpole could expose the foibles of his age; but a Chatham could only see its tragic aspect, and hence could inspire his countrymen with the serious enthusiasm proper to tragedy.

What, then, were the distinguishing traits of this new revival, which was to transform and redeem the eighteenth century? That it had much in common with the Puritan spirit goes without saying. It was distinguished by the same quickening of enthusiasm, the same tendency to exalt each human soul, and consequently the desire to explore its workings to the utmost depths of mysticism, and the subtlest ramifications of character. But romance is at once more varied and less intense than Puritanism, for while excelling it in colour and music, in breadth and freedom, it misses the earnestness that made even Milton strip his verse of ornament, as if it were an offence to God. The besetting weakness of the whole romantic movement was a certain deficiency of that ultimate and cosmic intensity of purpose, the white fire, which renders terrible the work of Dante and Milton. Often we suspect that the forms and creeds of the past are being revived merely to play with; that Chateaubriand's Christianity is neither more nor less real than Victor Hugo's Oriental passions; that Tieck's quest of a blue flower lacks the simplicity of the old fairy tales; that Scott's novels are sometimes too like his house at Abbotsford, in reproducing the picturesque forms, without the spirit of the past. True, these temptations are often and gloriously surmounted, but there are very few of the greater romantics who do not, at one time or another, fall under the suspicion of posing for effect.

It is noticeable that in the more solid arts, what we may call the arts of three dimensions, the romantic movement fails most conspicuously. It destroys what is best in its predecessors, and gives us little to replace it. In architecture we pass from the massiveness of Gibbs

to the schoolgirlish airs of the brothers Adam, and the almost incredible futility of Strawberry Hill and the eighteenth-century Gothic. In furniture we proceed by easy stages from the honesty of Chippendale to the finicking prettiness of Sheraton and his school, and thence to a style that aped, and outdid, the utmost vulgarity of Napoleon's Tuileries. In these arts we had entered upon an inclined plane, which descended continuously towards the early Victorian abyss.

On the other hand, what the romantics lose in strength they gain in delicacy. The old Puritan, even at his best, had been an austere man, who delighted to execute the wrath of the Lord and to hew Agag in pieces before Him. He was not troubled with nerves, and the same complacency that would undergo the tortures of Faithful, would see poor Ignorance tossed into hell. But to the romantic, any form of suffering was hateful. He could not find it in his heart to refuse sympathy, even to the Devil. How vast a change the new spirit had wrought since the days of Hogarth, may be gauged by perusing one of those delightful coloured sporting books, that appeared early in the last century, called " The National Sports of Great Britain," which, though evidently written by a lover of his subject, is haunted throughout by a sensitive regard for the feelings of the victims, and is uncompromising in its detestation of the more obviously brutal sports, such as cock-fighting, dog-fighting, and bear-baiting—a very different conception of the *summum bonum,* from that which survives to this day, in the proverb, " Well, if this don't beat cock-fighting ! "

It was fortunate for us Englishmen that a vigorous Puritan strain survived to strengthen and curb the impulse of romance, which was heralded by the Wesleyan revival, and, as some will have it, yielded its most precious fruit in the work of a Cumberland dalesman, the direct successor of Milton. There was never a time when such

confessions as those of Rousseau would have been tolerable to more than a small fraction of our countrymen, or when the vagaries of the German "Sturm und Drang" would have excited more than a smile. It was necessary for the supreme trial before us that enough iron should enter into the soul of England to break the might even of a Napoleon, and in no respect is the English phase of the movement more distinguished than by the Christian sincerity of its most typical products, Burke and Chatham and Nelson in action, Blake and Cowper and the Lake Poets in writing. It is only after the strain is relaxed that we have the complete break with the Puritan ideal in Keats and Shelley, and, more questionably, in Byron.

The distinctive note, the battlecry and watchword of the whole romantic movement, was Liberty. This also had been the cry of the Puritans, but since the Reformation the word had come to be better understood, or, at least, capable of a more various application. What had been aimed at then was freedom from sin, the lamentable cry of the man in rags, "What shall I do to be saved?" This is not precisely the same thing as, "Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains," the chains in this case being not spiritual, but temporal. There is, however, no opposition of principle, for Puritanism, if followed to its logical conclusion of justification by faith alone, would have carried with it freedom from all dogmatic, social and moral restrictions whatsoever. The less austere and more diverse nature of the romantic movement made its disciples adopt a broader conception of freedom, and pursue the goddess in every supposed manifestation, without being at too much trouble to ascertain whether it were the name, or the reality, after which they strove. The besetting danger of romance is anarchy.

Here we must tread carefully, for so Protean is this romantic spirit that it is hard to catch it in the net of any generalization. We have philosophers like Kant, to

whom freedom itself is under the sway of the categorical imperative; poets like Wordsworth, who feel the weight of too much liberty. But Kant and Wordsworth, in their respective departments, are revolutionists as pronounced as Rousseau. Everywhere the tendency is to break new ground, to snap bonds asunder, whether they be real or ideal, temporal or spiritual. Man himself becomes a god, and often becomes God.

> "Thou art a man, God is no more,
> Thy own humanity learn to adore."

This man-worship was stimulated by a view of human nature, not, however, universally accepted, which ran directly counter to the doctrine of original sin. Rousseau's view of man was that he was naturally good, and that he had only to shake off artificial constraint for his goodness to have scope. It was the same with Shelley, who considered it only necessary to get rid of Zeus, in order for the whole universe to obtain perfection. The effect of this doctrine was, of course, to encourage a material conception of liberty in practice, since it was only temporal bonds that needed breaking. Original virtue would do the rest.

This leads us to remark, that despite the spirit of romance being a direct reaction against eighteenth-century materialism, the two are often to be found conjoined in the same person. In Voltaire, for instance, as in Horace Walpole, we notice a sensitive humanity which shrinks from the spectacle of pain; whereas in Goethe's capacious genius full scope is found for both tendencies, and Faust is led, by beauty, to a peace of labour, in which the activities of the scientific age are obviously foreshadowed. But for all this, romance is a spirit, and those who worship at her shrine do so in spirit, if not always wholly in truth. Her triumph is that of the creative imagination, and men begin to feel their beliefs, instead of merely formulating them.

Naturally we shall be ready to find the revival of feeling associated with a strengthening of patriotism, and we have seen this holding true in the instance of Chatham. There was only one danger, lest the passion for liberty in the abstract should be found incompatible with love for the Motherland. The dilemma was that of the young Lake poets, who rejoiced in the defeat of British arms, and it lends its chief interest to the career of Charles Fox. But with this one exception, every characteristic of romance tended to the direct encouragement of patriotism. The deepening of the feelings increased the capacity for love, of which patriotism is part; the renewed interest in the past, and the cult of nature, struck out roots for the affections. England took on new and beautiful associations in the minds of her children. They loved her for every feature of her country-side, and every mood of her encircling sea; they loved her for her past; they loved her for the sake of their fathers, and the sake of their works; and, above all, they loved her when patriotism and freedom no longer jarred, and she stood forth as the champion of European liberties against the might of a tyrant.

The earliest phase of romance is largely sentimental. Amid the full-blooded grossness of the Whig ascendancy arise men who weep over a dead donkey, and ladies who go almost into convulsions over the long-drawn agonies of respectable Clarissa Harlowe. The reason is obvious. Emotion was so new and unnatural to the age, that its first manifestations were often forced and hollow-sounding. It must have been a blunted sensibility to which that King of Prigs, Sir Charles Grandison, could have appealed as an ideal character, and a man of sentiment. The three poetic stars that herald the dawn, Gray and Collins and Thomson, have to struggle, as it were, through heavy mists, and it is but a fitful and broken ray that even the brightest of them can diffuse.

Yet in each of them, it is already manifest how intimately allied is romance with the love of England.

The most obviously patriotic of them all is Thomson, who foreshadows so many traits of the new movement, but so uncertain is his muse, that sometimes we are almost inclined to think him a true child of the pudding age. He is always harping on mammon.

> " This deep-laid, indissoluble State
> Where wealth and commerce lift their golden heads ;
> And o'er our labours liberty and law
> Impartial, watch ; the wonder of a world ! "

In none of this sounds the inspired, or even the perfectly genuine note, and it is easy to detect the conventional rhetoric of the time. Thomson's ray is indeed a broken one. We need much sympathy, and not a little patience, if we are to do justice to a poet whose work so seldom rises to white-heat; and yet the divine fire, we feel, is there, though buried deep and smouldering. The noblest of all his compositions is, after all, that which England has agreed to adopt as her second, and secular, national anthem, and there can be no two opinions as to the fire or dignity of the stanza :

> " Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
> More dreadful from each foreign stroke ;
> As the loud blast that tears the skies
> Serves but to root thy native oak.
> Rule, Britannia, rule the waves,
> Britons never shall be slaves ! "

It is by what he foreshadowed, as much as by what he achieved, that Thomson is remarkable. He was a lover of England's past, and he tried, with more or less success, to strengthen the sense of national personality by praising our fathers. His plays have long passed out of mind ; but it is interesting to note that " Rule, Britannia " comes in a " Masque of Alfred " ; a bold venture, when the Middle Ages, and even Dante himself, had fallen under the accusation of barbarism. In " The Seasons " there is a long

panegyric, whose ambition outruns its performance, upon all England's worthies, from Alfred downwards. Not only this, but Thomson, in his "Castle of Indolence," strikes a blow at the Augustan tradition, by his clever posing in the garb of Spenser. As a nature poet, too, he begins to quicken that interest in the soil which is perhaps the most powerful of all incentives to patriotism. Here, again, Thomson rather foreshadows than achieves, for his work, though interesting and pretty, does not strike the true note; his affection is half-hearted and almost apologetic, and he casts over Nature a decent veil of abstractions, as if ashamed to expose her naked beauty. His apotheosis of her, in the course of which he apostrophizes the blue immense; the vegetable kingdom and mineral strata; the rising system, more complex, of the animal world; their motions, periods and laws, is more like a rhythmical primer than a poem, and his praise of the simple life, away from cities and courts, has the unreality, without the charm, of Marie Antoinette's elaborately natural picnics at the Trianon. And yet the man who wrote "The Seasons" must have loved the country after his fashion.

Of the shy and exiguous, but more delicate output of Gray, there is little, either in the poems or the correspondence, that directly stimulates patriotism. But in "The Bard," he attains a more passionate abandonment of love for a motherland than anything of which Thomson was capable, and though that land was Wales, it is cunningly implied that in future ages the love of Wales and the love of England will be one, and that the soul of Taliesin himself may awake to rapture at the glories of Elizabeth. Gray, though in a less obvious fashion than Thomson, is everywhere continuing the elder poet's work, planting firmer the foundations of romance, and preparing for a revival of patriotism. Love for the soil and its folk strikes a deeper note in the "Elegy" than in all the more pretentious rhetoric of "The Seasons." In Collins, the

truest poet of the three, and the nearest to freedom from the trammels of a prose age, the patriotic note is purest and most divine. A Wordsworth could have written nothing more fervent, nor Shelley anything more exquisite, than that immortal fragment which commences:

> " How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
> By all their country's wishes blest ! "

and concludes:

> " Freedom shall awhile repair
> To dwell, a weeping hermit there ! "

For the ideas of patriotism and liberty are blended in Collins's soul, thereby showing him a true Romantic. This had been the case with Thomson, but Thomson's Liberty, like his Nature, was a goddess in hoops and powder. Collins's ode to her is not yet itself entirely free; but it is a noble, and should be an immortal creation, worthy of figuring for its own sake in the most jealously exclusive anthology. Like Shelley's on the same subject, it traces, though in another spirit, the progress of Liberty down the ages. From Sparta, through Italy, the goddess comes to England, her last, her dearest abode, while the nations shout around:

> " O how supremely art thou blest,
> Thou, lady, thou shalt rule the West ! "

Collins's editor remarks of Anglesey and the Isle of Man, that " Both these isles still retain much of the genius of superstition, and are now the only places where there is the least chance of finding a fairy." The romantic spirit was to change all this, and bring back the little people to dwell in many a forsaken haunt. Not only to children does Peter Pan's wise saying apply, that when any one expresses disbelief in fairies, a fairy drops down dead, or perhaps we might say that the fairy claps on her invisible cloak, and politely declines all communication with any one so stupid. A keener sense of reality was awakened,

with the unchaining of the emotions. Men began to make the discovery that the old legends, which had been put aside as outworn barbarisms, were, first, of intense interest, and, afterwards, that they might contain a larger measure of truth than the polemics of a Warburton, or the metaphysics of a Hume. Collins himself is one of the first to realize this, in his grand ode, on what he still calls the "superstitions" of the Highlands, and in which, curiously enough, he pauses to glorify Culloden and its butcher.

It is obvious how this rekindling of the past tended to strengthen patriotism. As it had been in the days of the Armada, so it was now, and it is hard to distinguish between cause and effect. Men were moved to love their country by the loveliness of her past, and they studied her past because they loved her. One could find drawing-rooms and polite society in Paris, as well as in London, and such exotic souls, as those of Horace Walpole and Chesterfield, had no roots. But the smile of her fields, and the kinship of her dead, were for England's sons alone, and the time was coming, when to go beyond the seas would be but a melancholy dream, intensifying love by the deprivation of the loved one's presence. The countryside acquired a new beauty and new associations; the sense of national personality was wonderfully renewed, and the torch of faith glowed again, by communion with the ages of faith.

The pioneers of romance naturally displayed the same awkwardness in adapting themselves to the new outlook. The past, like Nature, was held to require much bowdlerizing before it was fit to appear in public, and even Bishop Percy was fain to trim his priceless "Reliques" before he offered them to his countrymen. It was a time when actors could insert lines into Shakespeare, and reverend critics supply the lines with which Milton ought to have ended "Paradise Lost." The forged sentiment of Mac-

pherson was greeted with a readier enthusiasm than would have been accorded to genuine work. Horace Walpole, who tried to throw himself into the new movement, produced an extraordinary story, in which the mailed legs of ghosts appear in passages, and helmets of gigantic size, and aimed with the most scientific accuracy, come tumbling out of space upon people's heads.

It was reserved for the hand of a child to fling open wide the gates of the past. To the young Chatterton, the son of a mystic, and living amidst the relics and documents of another age, the fifteenth century was more real than the eighteenth. William Canynge was a figure less remote than George III, and it was as natural for Chatterton to write medieval poems, as it is for some infant prodigies to tot up twenty columns at sight, or to interpret the sonatas of Beethoven. He breathes in the Middle Ages, and poetry, such as only its very first geniuses could have rivalled, was the language in which he naturally expressed himself. When he tried to compose in modern English, he succeeded even less than Burns. When did Gower, or Lydgate, or (save for one brief passage) Hoccleve, ever produce verse to equal the "Most Excellent Ballad of Charity," or "Sing unto my roundelay"? It did not require a Horace Walpole to detect the influence of modern writers tinging the medievalism of the Rowley Poems, but the spirit of "The Ballad of Charity" is that of the carols and mystery plays.

None the less was Chatterton in the full current of the Romantic movement, and in this sense a child of his time. His England may have been that of Canynge, but his patriotism was that of Thomson and Collins, only of an intenser flame. It is manifest in Ælla, who leaves his bride to fight for his country, and it inspires the unfinished tragedy of "Godwin." As we should naturally expect, it centres round the idea of Liberty, and the

chorus in "Godwin," which breaks off in the middle, is a masterpiece, both in its rousing appeal and in the thunder march of its changing metre. Thus it begins:

"When Freedom, dreste yn blodde-steyned veste,
To everie knyghte her warre-songe sunge,
Upon her hedde wilde wedes were spredde;
A gorie anlace bye her honge.
She daunced onne the heathe;
She hearde the voice of deathe."

Godwin and Harold are the patriots who seek to rally their countrymen against the encroaching tyranny of the Norman. As Harold cries:

"Nowe, Englande, ys the tyme
When thee or thie felle foemens cause moste die.
Thy geason wronges be reyne ynto theyre pryme;
Now wylle thie sonnes unto thie succoure flie."

The "Battle of Hastings," also unfinished, sounds a more personal note, though it contains some of Chatterton's finest individual passages, and one noble stanza, which describes the Men of Kent (Wordsworth's "Vanguard of Liberty") leading the English host, followed close by the citizens of Bristol, Chatterton's and Rowley's native town. Moreover, the old and half-forgotten Brutus legend, which had been one of the foundations of medieval and Elizabethan patriotism, takes new life in the "Englysh Metamorphosis." It is idle to speculate what Chatterton might have done, had he lived; since his achievement entitles him, child as he was, to an even higher place in the estimation of posterity than he has yet attained, and partly on account of the important part he plays in the literary revival of patriotism, that helped, however indirectly, to sustain us through our greatest trial.

The most important firstfruits of the new awakening were in the directly religious sphere. The influence of Wesley is more lasting even than that of Chatham, and there is less dissimilarity between the views of the two men

than we might at first be inclined to suspect. But from the purely spiritual point of view, William Law stands upon a higher plane than any other Englishman of his time. It is with him that religion begins to glow. In an age that scoffed at enthusiasm, he was both an enthusiast and a mystic, and Communion with Christ was the single aim of his life. But the book, upon which his reputation has come to rest, does him an injustice, since, at the time of the "Serious Call," he had not attained the serenity of his later years. There was a morbidity pervading most of the religious treatises of the time, which were not frankly rationalistic, and from this the "Serious Call" does not escape.

"Devotion," Law begins, "signifies a life given or devoted to God"; but there is about his "Serious Call" little of the serene love of St. Francis, or of the enraptured self-abandonment of St. Thomas à Kempis. He is the most material of mystics. He enjoins men to devote every day, every minute of their lives, to God's pleasure, but he goes on to make the choice of such a life almost as much a matter of calculation and expediency as the politics of Bubb Dodington. The fires of hell are always in the background, and we are left to gather, from the deathbed scene of Penitens, that it is better to deny oneself in this world than to be roasted in the next.

To please God is, according to the "Serious Call," a rather dreary business. The emotion that soared among the columns and arches of Gothic cathedrals, and made stones speak, was not for him. Devotion was to be a grey and very respectable course of life. Vanities of all kinds were to be eschewed, even "profane" scholarship. One of Law's awful examples is the man steeped in all the works of antiquity, and who is so fastidious as not only to learn the language, but also to penetrate to the spirit of the writers.

When all this has been taken into account, there is

still, in Law's book, much of priceless and eternal value. It has given comfort and inspiration to countless earnest and thinking men, and it is pitched in an altogether nobler key than the works of the greatest Georgian divines, even of Butler and Berkeley. The "Serious Call" is an attempt to transfer the seat of religion from the intellect to the heart, and to make the emotional life all-absorbing and all-important. But it was only after studying the works of that mighty seer, Jacob Boehme, that Law came into the full light of day, and earned the place that he holds, along with George Fox, among the world's greatest mystics. At last he can dispense with the gloomy hell thunders, and regard God with perfect love, and as the perfect Love that casteth out fear. "What a paltry logic to say God is Righteousness and Justice, as well as Love, and therefore His Love cannot help or forgive the sinner till His justice or righteous wrath is satisfied." Thus, casting aside the black and filthy rags of Dr. Watts, Law stands in heavenly armour, challenging the whole religious philosophy, orthodox and deist, of his time. All the erudition, all argument, is of less than no avail if the heart is wrong; religion is a thing to be lived, not reasoned. Its evidence is within, and its morality does not lie in the observance of rules and conventions, but in the ripe fruit that is naturally garnered from a tree, through whose branches flows the sap of Life. Thus Law would have called back his readers from the "Essay on Human Understanding," and the "Songs Divine and Moral," to the Gospel according to St. John. They had far to go.

It was for John Wesley and the Methodists to fan into a flame the spark that Law had kindled. Law's teaching had a strong influence on Wesley, and it was the Methodists who made the "Serious Call" vocal to the hearts of the people. With the intellectual basis of their teaching we have little to do. Long and bitterly

were points of doctrine contested, even between the leaders of the movement, but it is to such hymns as "Jesu, lover of my soul," that one has to go for the spirit and essence of Methodism. Here was religion as intense as, and more democratic than that of the Middle Ages; for it put the very humblest labourer or tradesman into direct contact with his Maker; it made him feel that he had a soul whose salvation was of vital importance, and it established a community of the elect, a Kingdom of Heaven, recruited impartially from every class, even the meanest in the land. The religion of the Anglican Church was almost cynically undemocratic. The parson co-operated with the squire in keeping the poor in their places, unless it was necessary in the cause of progress to push them still lower. Dr. Watts, who had a genius for putting his case in the most odious light, sings:

> "Though I am but poor and mean,
> I will move the rich to love me,
> If I'm modest, neat and clean,
> And submit when they reprove me.

And he teaches respectable little children to thank God that they are fed and clothed, while there are so many poor starving in the streets. It was its dangerous tincture with the doctrine of Christ, in this regard, that was largely responsible for the hold Methodism acquired upon the poor, and its extreme unpopularity among the rich. "This religion is highly improper," was the remark of a great lady, "it teaches the wretches to crawl above their sphere." Aristocratic Horace Walpole, who liked Gothic churches because they filled him with romantic dreams, at first took a contemptuous interest in Wesley, but soon came to regard Methodism as a "tawdry religion," and Whitefield as an arch-rogue, who encouraged the people to forgery and murder. He pleased himself with the theory that power and pelf were

all the revivalist leaders cared about, and this view of the movement, so comfortable to its holders, was echoed by Peter Pindar:

> " What have they done ?—those heav'nly strains
> Devoutly squeezed from canting brains,
> But fill'd John's earthy breeches ? "

Such is the fashionable opinion about most agitators, even when they are so inoffensive as Wesley.

As Rousseau was to France, so was Wesley to England. Both men gave the impulse to an emotional revival in their respective countries, and the difference between them is a difference of national temperament. What Wesley lacked in breadth and colour, he made up for in depth of purpose and strength of conviction. Intellectually, he cannot be said to have risen above mediocrity, and though naturally a man of taste and artistic sensibility, his narrow and Puritan pursuit of truth made him oblivious of beauty, and sometimes, even, of humanity.

Despite the tremendous spiritual revolution that he set himself to accomplish, he was rigidly conservative in nearly all matters of opinion. He was a patriot, and his patriotism was strongly tinged with the personal loyalty to the sovereign, that flows naturally from the injunction, " Fear God, honour the King," the text on which he preached when Newcastle was in peril from the Jacobites. He expounded to the soldiers what he himself described as a " manly, rational religion," and he took pride in the fact that the Methodists were able to acquit themselves well upon the field of battle, a pride which was justified by the testimony of Wellington, who found that devout Methodists were his best soldiers in the Peninsular War. Wesley writes to the Mayor of Newcastle at this critical time, " All I can do for His Majesty, whom I honour and love, I think, not less than I do my own father, is this :

I cry unto God day by day, in public and in private, to put all his enemies to confusion; and I exhort all that hear me to do the same, and, in their several stations, to exert themselves as loyal subjects, who, as long as they fear God, cannot but honour the King." We shall not be surprised when, at a later period, we find Wesley ranging himself on the side of George III and Dr. Johnson in supporting the taxation of the colonies. For though Christian humility may produce Ironsides, it is also liable to lead to passive acquiescence in public wrong. On the other hand, he was free from insular prejudice against foreigners. His account of Thurot's landing in Ireland is full of pity for the poor starving soldiers, and of admiration for their brave leader. He was indignant at the bad treatment of our French prisoners, and preached to them from the text, "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

For all this, Wesley and his followers made their appeal directly to huge masses of men, and thus were tempted to stimulate the crudest and most animal kinds of emotion. That to cheapen religion is the only way to poor men's souls, is surely disproved by the practice, not only of the Church of Rome at her best, but of our Lord Himself. There is in Methodism little of the grandeur of the older Puritans, of the vast erudition of a Calvin, the statesmanship of a Cromwell, the majesty of a Milton—the new movement had not even its John Bunyan. But the hatred of joy, the gloomy contempt for God's gifts, which had been the worst feature of the old movement, marked the new one also, and from the same source we may trace that blasphemous familiarity with the Deity, that marks to-day so many of the lower forms of the Protestant religion; though we have no doubt that Wesley himself would have been highly scandalized if anybody had offered to "grease him with the Gospel grease." If

Wesleyanism signalizes the awakening of the masses, it also foreshadows that drab and profane vulgarization that is the curse of modern democracy.

There is one of the immortals whom the Methodist movement can, to some extent, claim for its own. William Cowper forms an important connecting link between the Prose Age and the Epoch of Romance. All the new tendencies we have traced find, in some measure, their expression in his writings. One of the most pathetic and lovable figures in the whole of our history, he is of even more value for what he foreshadowed than for what he expressed. With more than a poet's sensitiveness, he was incessantly haunted by that fear of damnation which gave such a terrible force to the eloquence of Whitefield. He therefore hungrily snatched at the Wesleyan remedy of grace, and to its attainment his life was devoted; though he was in constant and harrowing doubt as to whether even this sop would avail to appease the Almighty Cerberus.

Cowper's spirit was too noble, and too complex, to rest content with the same crude solution as sufficed for the field preachers. For he was also a poet, a humorist, and a patriot. If he could sit at the feet of Wesley, he could, in his braver moods, join in the praises of Chatham. There is a portrait of the great Commoner in the "Table Talk," which brings him before us as vividly as does the marble in Westminster Abbey, "with all his country beaming in his face." And to this admiration of Chatham, Cowper naturally joined the cult of liberty, which was, in his mind, as much connected with Wesley as with Chatham; in other words it was religious, as well as political. The state of grace was, to the true believer, a state of deliverance from sin. Nor is this in any way a paradox, for it is the same idea as pervades the teaching of that subtlest of all philosophers, Hegel; to wit, that a man is only free when he is doing the best thing possible.

Thus, in " The Task," Cowper passes by an easy transition from one idea to the other :

> " 'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
> Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume ;
> And we are weeds without it."

Like so many of his countrymen, he is careful to contrast the polite servility of the French with the free roughness of the English ; though he characteristically observes, that only such freedom could excuse such roughness. Thence he passes to raise the idea of freedom to the spiritual plane. A man may be loaded with chains, and yet be gloriously free. Thus Cowper is ready to accord, to the martyrs, an even higher place than that of the patriots. Were he rigidly consistent, he would therefore aim at individual grace, to the exclusion of patriotism, and all other ideals of this world.

But he is not rigidly consistent. A man's soul may be judged by the fairest of its products, and Cowper's best poetry is as much concerned with his country as with his salvation. The love of nature, which he to such a large extent revived, strengthens his patriotism. The classical school, who went to Horace or to Boileau for inspiration, and who imparted a cult of heathen gods and French rules, were more likely to extinguish patriotism than to rouse it ; but, to a man like Cowper, English soil and English scenery were very dear, for their own sake, and down to the minutest detail. He no longer fights shy of nature, like Thomson, and if he has a fault, it is an excessive realism born of love. He does in poetry, what Constable does in painting ; he loves every detail of his native scenery so much, that he displays almost an aversion to the gorgeous and the pretty. He likes half-tones and cloudy skies, homely speech and a rugged metre, and he makes no secret of his contempt for those fashionable people, who patronize the country because it is a novelty or relaxation, amid the serious pleasures of the town.

This, alone, makes him the most English of poets. Abstract or generalized scenery can be appreciated anywhere, but only one who knows and loves Cowper's England can appreciate or understand Cowper. Though Ste.-Beuve has given him an attractive essay, his fame is, and will be, little, outside his own country. He clings to every detail of the English country-side, and to England herself, with all the abandonment of devotion of which his almost feminine nature is capable. How passionate was this love is apparent in his very imagery :

> " As one, who lay detained of foreign shores,
> Pants to return, and when he sees afar
> His country's weather-bleach'd and battered rocks
> From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
> Radiant with joy towards the happy land."

But his patriotism ranges beyond the shores of England, and embraces " realms that Cæsar never knew." His " Boadicea " is perhaps the first great, definitely imperial poem in our language. Cowper talks of our " Empire," and sometimes in very gloomy tones, as when he speaks of the loss of America. But he has shaken himself free from the eighteenth-century passion for trade. Luxury he looks upon as a danger, and he is righteously severe upon the conduct of the great mercantile companies, which lose all sense of humanity in their corporate dealings.

Thus is he ready to push his love for liberty to an extreme of altruism almost undreamed of earlier in the century. He denounces the slave trade with no uncertain voice, and both rebukes its cruelty, and satirizes its hypocrisy. The passion for liberty, which inspires the patriotism of romance, is often in conflict with national ideals, and in many of the greatest minds, when this is the case, patriotism stands in jeopardy. This is particularly so with men like Fox, and we shall see it carried to its extreme point in Shelley. There is a generosity about these men that leads them to feel the woes of foreign

nations as if they were their own, and which inspires Cowper's amazing and prophetic denunciation of the Bastille.

Cowper is in indirect succession, not only of Wesley and Chatham, but of the authors of the jeremiads. Though he allows one of the characters in the "Table Talk" to sneer at the "inestimable estimate of Brown," that is only for the other to justify the author. Brown had diagnosed the illness, though he had failed to predict the miraculous recovery. The poet thus addresses his country:

"Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee next?"

and after denouncing her luxury, her venality, and the avarice that starves two or three millions of mankind, he describes her as "A land once Christian, fall'n and lost." The same note is struck in "The Task," wherein he describes how

"Sober and good men are sad
At England's glory, seeing it wax pale."

But we have seen that Cowper's moods are not altogether consistent, and his patriotic enthusiasm gets quite the master of his pessimism, at the end of his poem on "Heroism," in which he talks of the

"Heaven-protected isle,
Where Peace and Equity and Freedom smile,
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood,
Where Pow'r receives what Industry has won,
Where to succeed is not to be undone;
A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,
In Britain isle, beneath a George's reign."

We see him at his very noblest neither when he praises, nor when he denounces, but in that famous passage, which voices the sentiment of a perfect lover:

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!"

Cowper's spirit comes close to that of a comrade in letters, whose smoothness and Popean polish are in

striking contrast with his own ruggedness. Oliver Goldsmith is a true Romantic in everything but form, and particularly in his touching and sensitive humanity. He and Cowper joined in denouncing the greed of wealth, which was depleting the country, to swell the man-made towns. The existence of a social problem was coming to be recognized, and a return to nature was taking place, similar in many respects to that which was being preached by Rousseau. The honest simplicity of poor and rustic folks was contrasted with the heartless and effeminate depravity of their superiors, and this cult was pushed to an extreme by Thomas Day, who created that insufferably virtuous farmer's son, Harry Sandford, to rebuke and reform the spoilt child of the wealthy planter, and to vanquish, in single combat, the gilded and overweening Master Mash. Yet is Goldsmith's romantic fervour qualified by a tincture of that same solid Toryism that possessed his most unromantic friend, Dr. Johnson. He is both an exponent, and a critic, of a patriotism founded upon liberty. In "The Traveller," which was written shortly after the end of the Seven Years' War, he thus apostrophizes his countrymen :

> "Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
> I see the lords of human kind pass by,
> Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
> By forms unfashioned, fresh from nature's hand,
> Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
> True to imagined right above control,
> While e'en the peasant boasts those rights to scan,
> And learns to venerate himself as man.
> Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictured here. . .

But even freedom is not an unmixed blessing. Goldsmith is in agreement with Cowper, in depreciating the churlishness, which so frequently mars the independence,

> "Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie."

But even worse consequence than this may flow from liberty. There is a danger of individualism degenerating

into selfishness and avarice, and finally ruining the State. Goldsmith gives a gloomy picture of what may happen, if such tendencies continue unchecked. But he instantly goes on to defend himself against the accusation of servility. He says of freedom, that he only wishes to repress her blooms in order to secure them, and reaches the rather tame conclusion that,

> All that freedom's highest aims can reach
> Is but to lay proportioned loads on each."

In the " Citizen of the World," he puts into the mouth of his Chinese philosopher a somewhat whimsical disquisition upon the same subject. Neither in popular control of legislation, nor in fewness of laws, nor in exemption from taxation, nor in security of property, are the English much better off than other European States. The palladium of our liberties is the monarchy. Owing to the strength of this element in the Constitution, it is possible for the laws constantly to be relaxed without danger, and thus Englishmen are able to transgress with impunity against all sorts of laws, which it may be equally inadvisable to cancel, or to enforce pedantically. This gives the Constitution of England " the strength of its native oak and the flexibility of the bending tamarisk." What a contrast is the cautious Liberalism of this Englishman with the fiery enthusiasm of men like Condorçet and Jean Jacques !

If we return for a moment to our " Dictionary of Political Phrases," we shall find a free-born Englishman to be " One who is continually bragging of liberty and independence when he has neither will nor property of his own "; and national egotism, " An unpardonable custom among the French of extolling their own merit to the skies, but never practised among the modest natives of this kingdom, though our presses are continually teeming with ' sons of liberty, roast beef and pudding, noble-minded Britons and free-born English-

men.' " The blending of the conceptions of liberty and patriotism was tending, sometimes, to produce a less offensively insular attitude than had been common among English patriots. Thus, in "The Traveller," we find the keenest sympathy and appreciation for other nations, though without any question of cosmopolitanism supplanting patriotism, the patriotism of others, as when Goldsmith says of the Swiss :

> " For every good his native wilds impart
> Imprints the patriot passion on his heart,"

or of France :

> " Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
> Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please."

The new spirit had begun to penetrate not only literature, but the world of politics and action. The soldier conquerors of America and India were, each in his way, men of the new spirit ; Clive, the high-strung, passionate adventurer, with his splendid dreams and unsteady character ; and Wolfe, who declared that he would rather have written Gray's " Elegy " than have taken Quebec. A new generation of statesmen was springing up, the opposite to the type of Sir Robert Walpole. The example of Chatham doubtless went for much, and Burke, though of less unqualified genius, was not less of a Romantic. His earliest pamphlets show the cast of his mind. One of them is an elaborate satire on Bolingbroke, who was generally held to be the supreme representative of infidelity and deism, and its object is to prove that if such principles are pushed to their conclusion, society can have no principle of cohesion. The other is a treatise on the sublime and beautiful. The golden age of English oratory was dawning ; Fox and Sheridan and Windham, Erskine and Wilberforce, were coming above the horizon, while Grattan's eloquence cast an undying radiance over the ill-fated Irish Parliament. The new spirit, various yet all-pervading, was breathing new life into the de-

liberations, even of placemen. An era was dawning, to which the wrongs of subject races were a theme for eloquence, and to which the slave trade was intolerable.

Fully to understand this renaissance, as it affected England, we must study it in its most characteristic, and perhaps its most sublime product. It is because, in William Blake, the Romantic spirit shines virgin from any alloy of the past, that to understand him is to understand romance as it affected England. He gives us the advantage, perhaps unique in history, of isolating one of the main spiritual forces that affect nations. Hence we make no apology for devoting to his work what may seem a disproportionate amount of our attention.

Blake will never take the throne, that belongs to him of right, as one of the kings of literature. The modern Blake cult is exotic and probably ephemeral, it is rather the fad of a clique than the homage of a nation. Swinburne's monograph is generous and interesting, but then Swinburne's ideals and methods were so directly contrary to those of Blake, as to make a fair estimate almost unthinkable at his hands; Messrs. Ellis and Yeats, voluminous and painstaking as their work undoubtedly is, fail in their task because they never seem able to grasp the fact that Blake was, all his life, a laughing, irresponsible child, whereas they persist in regarding him as a very pedantic and portentously solemn old man, whose plainest statements must be dissected for some esoteric meaning, and whose very jokes are either capable of demonstration, or inexcusable. The academic papacy is really very little affected one way or the other. The "Cambridge Modern History" includes a chapter on the Romantic movement, by an "ex-Professor of Poetry," who seems to consider the names of Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Cowley and Erasmus Darwin, more worthy of mention than that of the author of "Thel" and "Jerusalem."

To understand Blake, we must become as he was, child-

like, and in the truest and deepest sense, innocent. Those who, like Blake's latest critic, see in that masterpiece of nonsense, "The Island in the Moon," only a "morass of scurrilous abuse and plebeian coarseness, where, with all its forced merriment, there is never the least trace of wit," are just as incapable of understanding him as a rationalist alderman would be of appreciating Fra Angelico. Only a man of Blake's supreme greatness could have afforded to be so careless of it; he makes no attempt to truckle to our approbation, but just flings his treasure at our feet, and if we like to trample upon it, ours is the loss. His is the pure essence, the very alcohol of poetry. Without any trace of labour, he commands the white light of heaven, and it descends in mild, yet unimaginable purity, or dissolves into rainbows. We know of no other poet, who gives such a sense of plenary inspiration, to whom vision was as natural as sight, and expression as swift as the need of it. To the æsthete he will always be a stumbling-block; to the pedant and the worldly-wise, foolishness; only those who have known a child's laughter, a child's grief, can know Blake, and to know him is to love, perhaps even to worship him.

He differs from the young revolutionaries, whose work we have been examining, in that the love of freedom, which in him was a passion, in no way conflicted with his love of England. From the beginning to the end of his career, he adored his country with the deep religious fervour of the Hebrew, and with the laughing ardour of the Greek. He was naturally drawn towards the Elizabethans, and many features of the Armada period recur in his works. Thus we see the passionate love of the soil and scenery of England, in his four beautiful blank-verse poems on the seasons; he loved, like Burns, to enter into the rough sport of her simple folk, and did not scorn to be the poet of blind man's buff; and he wept over her silent muses, the victims of a prose age.

But perhaps the most notable of his early pieces is the fragment of a play, " King Edward III." Here the worship of England and of freedom (for they are the same cult to Blake) is expressed with the fervour of a Chatham. Says the Black Prince on the eve of Cressy :

> " He is a genuine Englishman, my Chandos,
> And hath the spirit of Liberty within him.
> Forgive my prejudice, Sir John ; I think
> My Englishmen the bravest people on
> The face of the earth."

Sir John Chandos answers him that courage proceeds from self-dependence, and the King follows with a grand invocation to Liberty, which he sees hovering above his army. In another place, we have the sovereignty of the sea described as

> " our right, a right which Heaven gave
> To England, when first at the birth of Nature
> She in the deep was seated. . . ."

Then we have a chorus of English warriors, which takes us back to the legendary glories of our ancestor, Trojan Brutus (a true Elizabethan touch, this), and ends with a vision of Liberty, towering upon the cliffs of Albion, and covering the shore of Albion with her wings. Grander still is the " War Song to Englishmen," with its single-hearted and iron concentration of purpose :

> " Whose fatal scroll is that ? methinks 'tis mine !
> Why sinks my heart ? Why faltereth my tongue ?
> Had I three lives, I die in such a cause
> And rise, with ghosts, over the well-fought field,
> Prepare, prepare."

The souls of our ancestors, Alfred and Cœur de Lion and " black-browed Edward," shall rise and welcome the spirits of those who fall ; our cause is Heaven's cause, it behoves us to be worthy of it.

The " Songs of Innocence " might have had for an alternative title " Merrie England," the playground of a child's dream, England as it might be, but for what man has

made of man. The atmosphere is that of the sweet meadow-lands of our southern counties, except where the charity children worship in St. Paul's, beneath the eyes of the "wise guardians of the poor." In the "Songs of Experience," we have the terrible awakening from this dream. We know of nothing to compare with them, save the figure of the child in Velasquez's "Christ at the Column." One forgets even the agony of the Saviour, beside the pain depicted on that little face; it is in vain that the angel endeavours, with outstretched hand, to point the moral—the poor child is only shocked, revolted, at this new hideous anomaly of suffering and injustice. It is so in Blake's London, so simple and yet so agonizing; the "chartered" streets, the "chartered" Thames, the wretched weak faces, the cry of the sweeper, the sigh of the hapless soldier, the curse of the young harlot. And at the end of "The Little Boy Lost," with its poignant symbolism of the repression of childhood, comes the agonized query of the poet himself, "Are such things done on Albion's shore?"

In one of his later poems, the "Auguries of Innocence," Blake goes to the very roots of political philosophy, in a series of simple and profound maxims, expressed in four-foot couplets. The lesson he teaches is the organic unity of the State, and he attacks the same problem as Burke; for as Burke had shown that the present, the past and the future of a nation are all one, so Blake shows how, at any particular moment, you cannot injure the meanest member, not even dumb animals, without poisoning the whole body. And in this poem we see the horror of war, which so often tinges the thought of brave and patriotic men,

> "The soldier, armed with sword and gun,
> Palsied strikes the summer's sun."

Never did the fighting instinct, which was the essence of Blake's character, abate its energy, but, as time went on,

he seems to have felt an increasing desire to lift all warfare on to the spiritual plane. Full of confidence in his own genius and inspiration, he had conceived the stupendous idea of recreating England after the image of his own ideal, of transforming the Hell of Experience into the Heaven of Innocence.

> " I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land."

It was a task that might well have daunted any man but Blake. But the man who invented his own process of printing and set up his own press, was as little to be cowed by spiritual as by material obstacles. He saw clearly what was ailing his country, and in one of those careless-seeming epigrams, which even his followers have agreed to treat with patronizing regret, [illegible]p the whole case against a prose age :

> " When nations grow old,
> The arts grow cold,
> And Commerce settles in every tree,
> And the poor and the old
> Can live upon gold,
> For all are born poor (aged sixty-three)."

Will it be believed that the Blake critics try to deduce from this, that the poet was sixty-three years old ?

The enemy of truth and freedom was not, as Blake saw, so much the spirit of wickedness as the spirit of materialism, of cold, uninspired reason. Again and again, the spectres of Bacon, of Locke and of Newton are singled out as the objects of the fiercest attack. All these tendencies are embodied in the " mistaken Father of Men " Urizen, the grimly greybeard who sits amid clouds and darkness, and promulgates his tables of the Ten Commandments. Just as there is nothing petty about Blake, so there is no pettiness in the figure of his great enemy; there is something in him of the Hebrew Jehovah, some-

thing, perhaps, of the lonely author of the synthetic philosophy; he embodies a deeper conception even than Goethe's Mephistopheles, and when the "Herr Gott" spoke of the bold, denying spirits, more dangerous by far than the witty spirit of negation, perhaps he referred to such a demon as Urizen.

For there is nothing superficially devilish about the "Father of Men." He knows how to shed false, self-deceiving tears; he is no stranger to pity, pity that being cold, is more deadly in its embraces than the fiercest thrusts of hate. He has been worshipped as God in a thousand churches and temples; he is the patron of numberless schools and universities; he has tied more marriage knots than any priest; he has killed prophets and poets and has wept over their graves; Pharisees and Philistines are his elect; his garment is called law. There have been martyrs for Urizen, men who have blindly sacrificed body and mind and health and pleasure, that the world might become hard and unlovely—for in more senses than one, the road to hell is paved with noble intentions.

Opposed to Urizen is Los, the spirit of creative genius, who is often identified with Blake himself. The "Book of Urizen" is an account of his struggle to deliver the world from Urizen's tyranny; it is poetry grappling with a prose age. Once, after seven ages of dismal woe, Los shrinks from his task altogether, and his fires grow cold; but at last the child Orc, the spirit of passion, is born, and Fuzon, the brightest of the sons of Urizen, who is reason touched by fires of inspiration, leads his elect out of Urizen's Egyptian bondage, towards the land of promise.

The question now arises, how far Blake's words are to be accepted in any literal sense; whether such names as Albion, America, Europe, Locke and Milton are to be taken as meaning what they say, or merely as symbolic of certain states of mind. Here the critics are sadly

at fault. Messrs. Ellis and Yeats have evolved a wonderful system, by which Blake's most inspired and simple passages are treated as a sort of Chinese puzzle, and by which his whole art and poetry is reduced to the level of some monstrous problem in mathematics. Mr. de Selincourt naively opines, that Blake must have been mad to have been so very consistent, though, in the true spirit of our critical inquisition, he pounces, a few pages further on, on the inconsistencies of his insanely consistent victim. The fact is, of course, that Blake was neither a mathematician nor a Kabbalist, but a poet. He wished to give voice to spiritual truths, for which our ordinary language as yet afforded no adequate expression. He was like the friend of St. Paul, who was caught up into the third heaven, and saw things without a name. Just as he had to make his own printing press, so he had to make his own language, and it was a long and difficult process, in the course of which he tried many experiments, and met with some failures. The symbolism of his earlier books is quite different from that of "Jerusalem." Again, it is not conceivable that he, whose vision aspired to regions almost undreamed of, should see everything with that cool and mathematical certainty which his admirers have attributed to him. Had this been what he claimed, we should have been inclined to think him a charlatan rather than a poet. Sometimes, by his own admission, the visions failed him altogether, and then, as his wife once said, "We kneel down and pray, Mr. Blake." He saw through a glass darkly, or by lightning flashes on a starless night, new heavens and a new earth, and he strove, in wild broken sentences, to tell of what he had seen.

We are now in a better position to follow the development of Blake's message to Englishmen. He was the greatest of all the apostles of Liberty, but the Liberty of

which he dreamed was purged from the crudities of Jacobins and philosophes; it was a thing of the spirit, and the Bastille that it assailed was no stronghold of stone and mortar, but the fastness of Urizen himself, built with stones of religion on foundations of law, and cemented with the tears and sweat of ages. Political liberty did not seem to him important enough to be worth troubling about; indeed, he must have known that, apart from spiritual liberty, all revolutions are but the unchaining of brutes. And yet he conceived glowing hopes, both from France and from America.

The "Book of America" was written in 1793, and shows that Blake, like Chatham, did not find it inconsistent with his love for England to rejoice in the resistance of America. It is curious to observe how he hesitates between the literal and the symbolic interpretation of these events. He was fond of the study of history, and he saw behind each event its spiritual cause; he realized, too, the essential oneness of nature, and he knew that what goes on in the great world of nations, is repeated in the little world of jarring thoughts and motives, that is in each individual man. Thus Blake sees the real Americans actually struggling against the tyranny of England, just as each free spirit strives against the chains of a prose age. In the prelude we have the freeing of red Orc, the spirit of passion, as yet blind and brutal, the presiding genius of the September massacres and the Reign of Terror. Roused by sullen fires that glow across the Atlantic, Washington points out to his friends the chain of slavery that is descending, link by link, from England. The Prince of Albion appears in his wrath; the whole zenith is enraged and pours blood, and out of the Atlantic rises the terrible form of Orc. Then, amidst bloodshed and terror, a voice arises chanting the triumphal prophecy of Liberty:

"For Empire is no more, and now the Lion and Wolf shall cease."

The Angel of Albion hurls back the familiar curse of political and social and literary tyranny:

" Blasphemous Demon, Antichrist, hater of Dignities,
Lover of wild rebellion and transgressor of God's law ! "

But the " Terror," who now declares himself to be Orc, retorts with an even wilder defiance, stamping the " stony law " of Urizen, with all its sanctities and restrictions and decencies, into the dust, and proclaiming the grand central truth of the gospel of Blake:

" Everything that lives is holy, life delights in life,
Because the soul of sweet delight can never be defiled."

Then Orc arouses the thirteen angels of the thirteen United States; led by the angel of Boston, they refuse to pay allegiance to Albion; the plagues that are launched against the Americans recoil upon Albion, and, with the weakening of the tyrant's power, England herself feels the breath of Liberty; her " bard " arouses and affrights the ancient heavens; Urizen's priests flee into reptile coverts. But Urizen is too strong for England, and for twelve years (we note that this number, like that of the thirteen States, is literal, not symbolic) the weak govern the strong; until France receives the demon's light, and fierce fires again burn round the heavens, and round the abodes of men. However much Blake may have been thinking of mental symbolism, it is obvious that he intended to write a symbolic account of actual events, and though he may have been mistaken in his opinion, he certainly did imagine that the French and American Revolutions were notable blows struck at the power of Urizen.

The year after the " America," Blake wrote the " Book of Europe." He describes how Urizen has held the world in bondage for eighteen centuries, the stronghold of his power being Verulam, the abode of Bacon. Here we have an instance of Blake's sanity and fairness. The trumpet of the Last Judgment which has been in vain

essayed by Orc, is sounded by Newton, and the angels of Urizen come fluttering down like autumn leaves. We are to learn from this how honest and humble science, such as Newton's, may clear a path for the higher and spiritual energies of men. The prophecy, like that of "America," concludes with the appearance of red Orc in the vineyards of France. Then Los calls all his sons to battle, and the Romantic period has begun.

The most stirring of Blake's hymns of revolution is his "Song of Liberty." This was printed at the end of "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," and it is a piece of pure and passionate music, without rhyme and without rhythm. The method is that of an earlier and greater Walt Whitman, and it takes the form of an appeal, as much as that of an interpretation: "France, rend down thy dungeon! Golden Spain, burst the barriers of old Rome! Cast thy keys, O Rome, into the deep down falling!" The fires of Orc fall upon the regions of Urizen. "Look up! look up! O citizen of London, enlarge thy countenance! O Jew, leave counting gold, return to thy oil and wine! O African! black African! (Go, winged thought, widen his forehead)." Urizen and all his hosts rush down in vain, they are buried beneath "Urthona's dens." But the gloomy King is not yet beaten, and he leads his rallied army through the wilderness, to do fresh battle with Orc, a shrewd anticipation of the Holy Alliance. Elsewhere Blake thus sums up the situation, past and future:

> "When France got free, Europe, 'twixt fools and knaves
> Were savage first to France, and after—slaves."

But the two grand constructive books are "Milton" and "Jerusalem." The former involves the conception of the spirit of Milton, returning to earth, to do battle against the coldness of the age. He is roused from his sleep by a bard, who tells how Satan and Palamabron, reason and passion, have usurped each other's functions,

and the consequent discomfiture of Los, the creative genius. Milton goes forth upon his work of redemption, and his course is traced midway between their two realms, towards the Northern Kingdom of Los. But Blake was not altogether in sympathy with the old Milton, as we may see both from "Heaven and Hell," and from "Jerusalem." Milton's Puritan disposition smacked too much of Urizen. It was necessary for him to undergo a process of self-annihilation, in order to accomplish his great mission, and so thoroughly was this accomplished, that at last Milton became Jesus, since it is part of Blake's gospel that art and Christianity are one; for the "natural religion" of the eighteenth century, even that of Rousseau, was anathema to Blake, "Asserting the self-righteousness against the universal Saviour." Milton describes the new England he would create, in words of fire:

> "To cast off Bacon, Locke and Newton from Albion's covering,
> To take off his filthy garments and clothe him with imagination,"

and Blake himself is so carried away by the intensity of his vision, that he is found by his wife in a dead faint.

"Jerusalem" is the most elaborate and ambitious of all the prophetic books, and it contains a profusion of new, and often quite useless symbols, which make it sometimes hard reading. But the energy of inspiration never flags, and if the text is sometimes difficult, the sanity and grasp of the poet are fully proved, by the prose prefaces to the various divisions, which are models of simplicity and incisiveness. It describes the passage of Albion, from the "sleep of Ulro" to the ideal "Jerusalem." And what is this Jerusalem? It is a state where the spiritual imagination is free and all-powerful. Codes of ethics, systems of right and wrong, are here meaningless; the will of man has now become the will of God; the delights of sense are as innocent and free as those of the spirit; even Urizen is redeemed; Bacon, Locke, and Newton

appear at last beside Milton and Chaucer; reason is no longer at war with imagination. This heaven is not one of patient mediocrity, but of genius; things are purified not by repression, but by excess, and the worship of God is the worship of God's Spirit in man. The way to Jerusalem, as Blake tells us again and again, is by the forgiveness of sins. The meaning of this is apparent from the sentence in which Blake sums up, weighs, and finds wanting, the philosophy of Rousseau. "Rousseau thought Men Good by Nature: he found them Evil and found no friend." Blake is noble enough to love without illusions. The problem he proposes for humanity has to be solved often enough in ordinary life. Marriage is usually entered upon under the glamour of an almost deliberately forced illusion of angelic perfection, but the real test of love is when the faults and blemishes of the ideal are revealed, and one has to love a real man or woman with, and in spite of, the frailty of human nature. It is this treatment that Blake would extend to all mankind alike, friends and foes. Some critics have been scandalized by the way in which Blake names the huge elemental powers of nature after quite insignificant people, like the soldier Schofield. But this is part of Blake's philosophy. Schofield is a man, God is no more, and Schofield, like the power he symbolizes, also dwells in eternity.

The application of this teaching, the true Christianity, to international affairs, is quite obvious and very important. It is a common delusion that you must necessarily hate the man you fight. We read, in a book of little note, the following very typical fallacy: "An army is by no means a school of chivalry, for it assumes, to begin with, that the cause for which it fights is just; infers, in the next, that the enemy is an aggressor and a traitor." Now this last sentence, as every soldier and patriot worth the name knows, is the most pernicious of fallacies.

On Trafalgar Day, the most beautiful wreath around Nelson's column is that placed there by the Navy League, in honour of Villeneuve, Gravina, and their brave sailors, who fell fighting for their countries. It is this spirit, and not that of the Yellow Press and the music-halls, that makes nations great; it is this that we may learn from all evangelists, whether ancient or modern.

Throughout his career, Blake's love for England never flags. It is always Albion that he dreams of making beautiful. Jerusalem is to be the emanation of Albion, and is to overspread the whole earth. A line that serves him for a refrain is:

> "All things begin and end in Albion's ancient, Druid, rocky shore."

And his love for his native land is so intense, that every part of it is sacred to him, and he goes to lengths from which even Shakespeare would have shrunk. A certain journalist recently produced a funny book, in which an Empire of Notting Hill strives with armies from Bayswater and Battersea and Shepherd's Bush. But to Blake, this would have seemed quite natural and serious. Houndsditch and Finchley and the "Green Man" and the "Jew's Harp" are names just as sacred to him as Jerusalem or Beulah. One of the causes that have most tended to prejudice people against him, is the way he mixes up the most familiar and despised names with those of sanctuaries and principalities and powers; and yet it is only the man who is great enough to take Hoxton and Peckham and Canning Town seriously, who need ever aspire to grapple with the problem of England's decay and England's salvation.

Blake thinks and writes in terms of patriotism. His mind, like that of the Elizabethans, is constantly dwelling upon the real and legendary history of England. He has visions of the faces of her ancient kings, and even the familiar nursery refrain of "I smell the blood of an Eng-

lishman" is sufficient to furnish a basis for symbolism. If the theories of gentlemen like Max Nordau were really true, it would be open for some cosmopolitan critic to say of Blake, "Much patriotism hath made him mad." The war against France moved him, even in his growing seclusion from mundane affairs. He drew the spirit of Nelson riding Leviathan "in whose wreathings were the nations of the earth," and, to use his own words, "The spiritual form of Pitt guiding Behemoth. He is that Angel who, pleased to perform the Almighty's orders, rides on the whirlwind, directing the storms of war. . . ." A worthy epitaph for the pilot statesman, and in noble contrast with Byron's cruel sneer.

Blake failed in what he undertook. Still one may pace the banks of the "chartered Thames," and mark the weakness and the woe in the face of each passer-by; commerce has indeed come to settle in every tree; little children are still born old; Blake himself has become partly an interesting historical phenomenon, partly a ridiculous idol, worshipped in the very temples, and by the very priests, he would fain have overthrown. And yet his work was not in vain. Perhaps it will not be counted to him for a little thing, that to a few weary and despairing pilgrims of the world, he has shown, as from the Delectable Mountains, the very gates of the Celestial City; and that though the wise men of an iron age have passed him by, his message may yet find an echo in the heart of a child.

END OF VOL. I.

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